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MANHOOD-CRUSHING MANACLES

Fig. 1

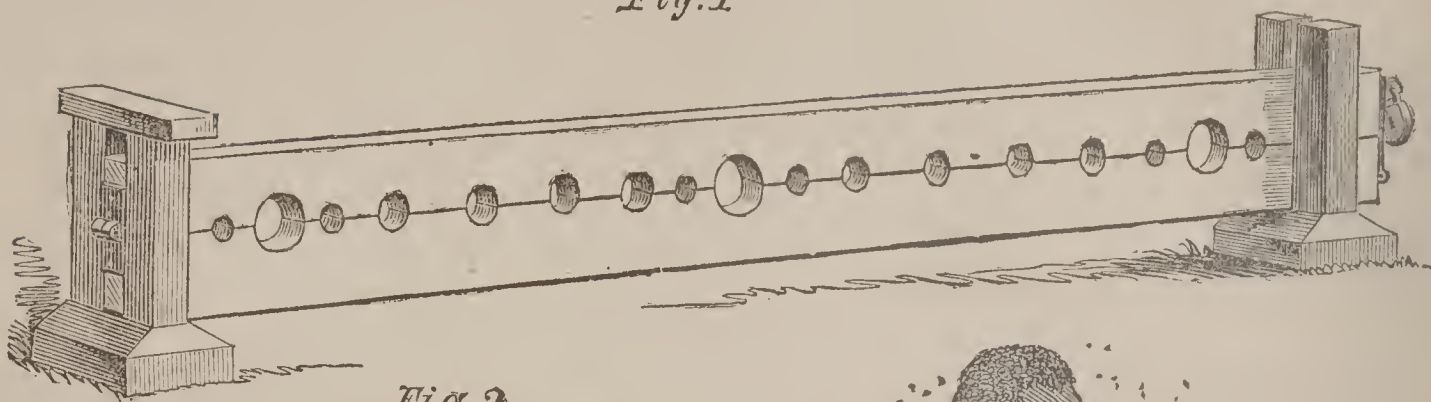


Fig. 2

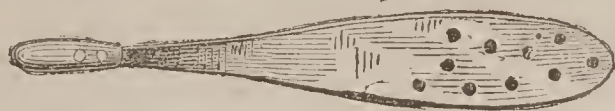


Fig. 4



Fig. 3

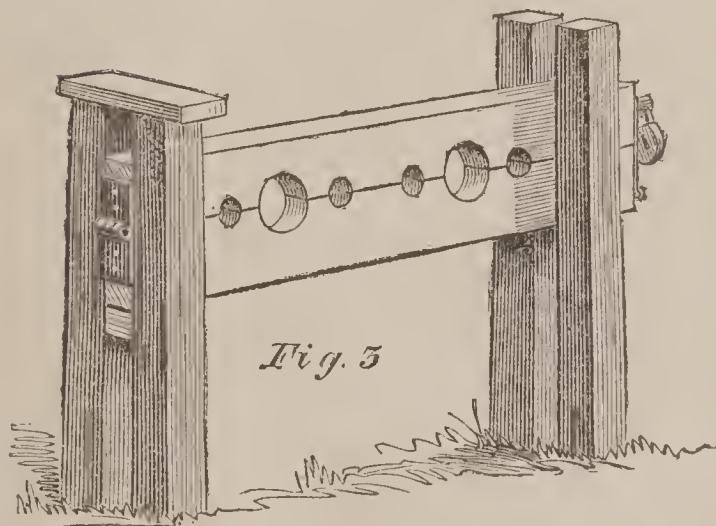


Fig. 5



Fig. 6

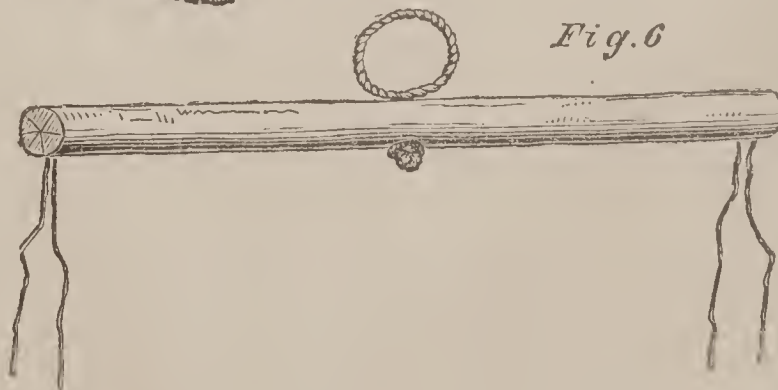


Fig. 1. Neck, Wrist, and Ankle-Stocks. 2. Sole-Leather Paddle. 3. Pillory, or Half-bent Stocks. 4. Barrel Punishment. 5. Flogging Stakes. 6. Spread-Eagle Pole.

INSIDE VIEWS

OF

SLAVERY ON SOUTHERN PLANTATIONS.

BY

JOHN ROLES,

For twenty-five years a resident of the South, and for ten years an overseer on some of the largest cotton plantations.

WITH AN INTRODUCTION

BY

NATHAN BROWN,

CORRESPONDING SECRETARY OF THE AM. BAP. FREE MISSION SOCIETY.



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INTRODUCTION.

To understand Slavery we must look at it from several points of view. We have had many accounts of its horrors, viewed as the poor sufferer views them; the narratives of those who have felt the iron in their souls, and whose testimony is invaluable as a plain record of individual sorrows. We have portraits also from the pens of talented authors, who have taken the meager skeletons furnished by sufferers and eye-witnesses, and have dressed them up in the imagery of life, throwing over them sinew and muscle, flesh and blood-hue, and that freshness which fiction so well knows how to impart. Mrs. Stowe gave us *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, unrivaled for its judicious admixture of light and shade, relieving the harrowing details of the main story by genial and attractive episodes, and sweet lessons of negro piety learned in the school of suffering. Mr. Hildreth's *White Slave* was perhaps even more faithful, as a delineation of Southern life, than the work of Mrs. Stowe; but the picture was so black, the characters so revolting, the scenes so absolutely diabolical, that few could endure the perusal, and hence its circulation was comparatively small. On the economical question, the careful work of Helper is all that could be desired.

But we still needed to view the subject from the standing-point of the master himself, or of the driver, who carries out the owner's wishes in the systematic torture of human nerves. Here was a riddle, a wantonness of cruelty that seemed so totally at variance with the ordinary instincts of humanity, as to create a doubt of the fairness and correctness of the testimony. The narrative of the poor fugitive shed little or no light on the *motives* of the master or overseer; their conduct seemed inexplicable; there was, in many cases, nothing but the gratuitous infliction of pain without any apparent object, save the infernal delight of seeing a fellow-being suffer.

The narrative of Mr. Roles solves the mystery. It explains the theory and working of the slave-system as it has been explained by no other writer. The secret springs that move both master and slave are here unfolded. Mr. Roles shows us slave-driving as a science. Like every other successful overseer, he had reduced the rules of his profession to a system. Nothing was done from passion; every thing was the result of deliberate calculation. With the overseer, slave-driving is simply a business; he has one standard by which every thing is measured; how to make the largest profits is the only problem he has to solve. To make slavery profitable, it has long since been ascertained that man must be converted into a machine; a passive instrument; an intelligent yet unresisting THING; human powers and faculties without a human will, or rather with a will completely guided and molded by the will of another.

To bring a human being into this condition of perfect servitude, great cruelty is necessary. Especially is this the case with slaves sent southward from the Border States, whose spirits have not been thoroughly broken before

arriving at manhood. In the province of Assam, on the northern frontier of India, some two thousand wild elephants are captured annually and trained to become beasts of burden. These huge animals are lured by decoy elephants into concealed pits, whence, having once fallen, they are utterly powerless to escape. The prey being fairly secured, the hunters commence a course of systematic torture, chiefly by starvation, which is kept up till the spirit of the noble beast is completely crushed, and he becomes a mere tool in the hand of his keeper. The gigantic brute, recently roaming the forest in all his pride and independence, is now so thoroughly subdued that he needs no bit or bridle for guidance or restraint; with lamb-like docility he obeys even the slightest motion of his driver, and cringes submissive beneath the iron goad that is too often mercilessly plunged into his scarred head. Some conception of the suffering it costs to transform these animals into passive instruments of man's will may be drawn from the fact that two thirds of them die in the training.

But how dreadful to think that the same principle should be applied to human beings, requiring the crushing out of heart and soul, desire and hope, in order to convert man into a machine for the use of his brother man! Yet this is precisely what slavery does. We learn from the narrative of Mr. Roles, that no man can succeed as an overseer, who does not understand the art of crushing out the slave's manhood, and transforming him into the image of the brute. A humane driver, who compromises the interests of his employer, from motives of compassion to the slave, will soon find that he has undertaken to combine things totally incompatible; that the intense strain of labor necessary to the production of a heavy cotton crop can not be kept up without the powerful stimulus of the lash and the stocks; that he must either sacrifice all the kindly feelings of his nature, or else give up his business. Mr. Roles, after his conversion, chose the latter. He saw what every man sees, and what every honest man confesses, that to indulge the Christian's hope or make the Christian's profession, while trampling on the rights of a brother man, would be rank hypocrisy in the sight of Heaven. Against the remonstrances of his friends, who told him that now he had the opportunity to show how a Christian overseer could perform the duties of his calling, he abandoned a lucrative position, and rendered himself an object of dislike and suspicion.

Since leaving the South, Mr. Roles has devoted himself to plans for the free-labor cultivation of cotton in Africa, the West-Indies, and Central America. In his narrative we have abundant evidence of his strict and most scrupulous adherence to facts. No one, indeed, can peruse it without perceiving that it is the statement of an honest, truthful man. The only veil thrown over the actors in the scenes here described is the suppression of their names, an initial or final letter being used instead. Mr. Roles has given us, in a separate paper, the full name of each individual; many of them we discover as extensive landholders in the maps and sketches sent from our army and published in the papers during the operations of Generals Grant and Banks in Louisiana and Mississippi. As these sketches were written before the great rebellion, there is of course no allusion to that event; but the facts here stated throw a flood of light on the causes, motives, and interests which have precipitated one of the greatest, most fearful, and wanton wars ever waged against humanity.

Slavery has at length borne its legitimate fruit. It was introduced for the sake of gain; it has ended in terrible loss. Instead of being a mine of wealth, it has cost the nation hundreds of thousands of lives, and tens of hundreds of millions of treasure. It has been a speculation, on a grand scale, in the tears, blood, and souls of men; and the results are so deplorable that the experiment will probably never be repeated. May the last relic and trace of the diabolical system be speedily removed from our land and from the world!

The following credentials will show the character and standing of Mr. Roles, at the time he left the South, among those with whom he had been connected.

“The First Baptist Church of Natchez send Christian salutation to any sister church.

“DEAR BRETHREN: The bearer, Mr. John Roles, is a member in good and full fellowship with this church, and upon request has this day been dismissed by letter, and when united to another church, our particular watch-care over him will cease. We take pleasure in commending Brother Roles to your Christian regard and fellowship, as worthy to receive the same; and we fervently pray that when he shall have united with the church of his choice, the relation may be mutually pleasant and profitable.

“In behalf of and by order of the church.

“Done at special meeting, first Sabbath in March, 1854.

“IRA CARPENTER, Church Clerk.”

“WE, the undersigned, residents of the city of Natchez, Mississippi, and its vicinity, take pleasure in certifying that Mr. John Roles has been residing in this vicinity upwards of twenty years; that during that time he has been employed in many positions of responsibility, by various persons, and by some of the undersigned; and that upon all occasions he has conducted himself as a man of the strictest honesty and integrity.

“W. R. C. VERNON, of Parish of Concordia, La.

“JAMES COLLINS, Natchez.

“P. H. MCGRAW.

“E. PROFILET.

“FREDERICK STANTON.

“NATCHEZ, Miss., Feb. 1857.”

“I am personally acquainted with all the parties whose names are signed to the above recommendation, and entire reliance can be placed on their statements.

“S. B. NEWMAN, of Buckner, Stanton & Newman.

“NEW-ORLEANS, Feb. 21, 1857.”

“HER BRITANNIC MAJESTY’S CONSULATE }
FOR THE STATE OF LOUISIANA. }

“KNOW all persons to whom these presents shall come: That I, William Mure, Esq., her Britannic Majesty’s Consul for the city and district of New-Orleans, do hereby certify that S. B. Newman, Esq., whose signature is attached to the annexed document, is a gentleman of good standing and repute in this city, and that to his statement in relation thereto full faith and credit can be given.

[L. s.]

“Given under my hand and seal of office, at the city of New-Orleans, in the State of Louisiana, the United States of America, the 21st day of February, one thousand eight hundred and fifty-seven.

“WM. MURE, H. B. M. Consul.”

COINS CURRENT IN SLAVEDOM.

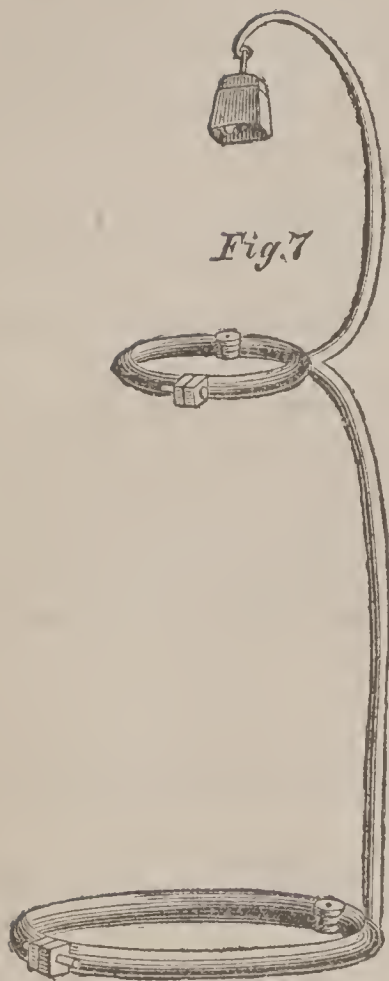


Fig. 7



Fig. 8



Fig. 9

Fig. 10

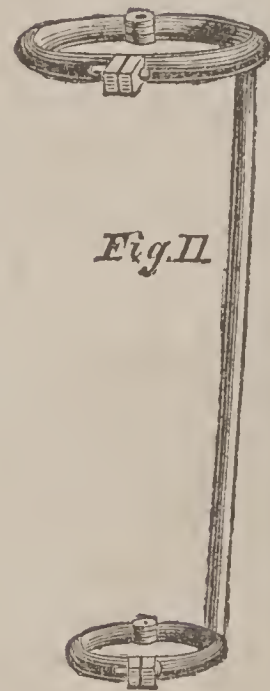


Fig. 11



Fig. 12

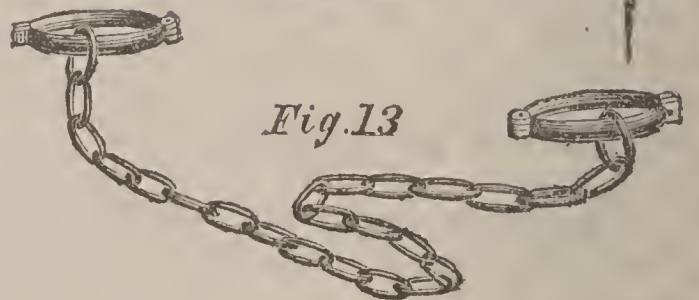


Fig. 13

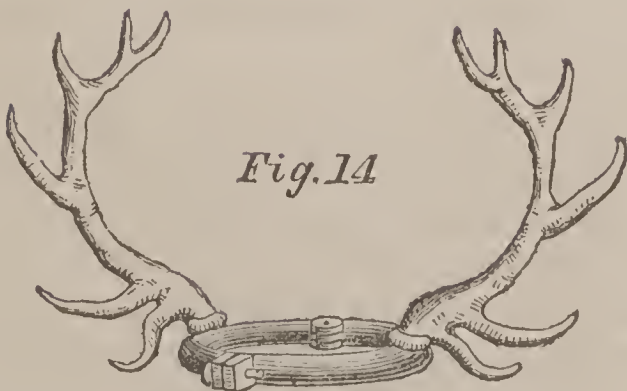


Fig. 14



Fig. 15

Fig. 7. Bell Irons. 8. Overseer's Whip. 9. Gag. 10. Rawhide Switch. 11. Stiff Leg. 12. Iron Neck-Collar. 13. Coupling Chain. 14. Buck's Horns. 15. Iron Horns.

INSIDE VIEWS OF SLAVERY

ON

Southern Plantations.

BY AN OLD OVERSEER.

INSIDE VIEWS OF SLAVERY.

CHAPTER I.

Preliminary Remarks.

Is American slavery a beneficent institution? This is the great issue that now divides the American people. The *Columbus (S. C.) Review* says: "Slavery is undoubtedly good, and only good." "I repel the charge of cruelty," says the Rev. Dr. Wilson, of Baltimore. So far from being an evil, a relic of barbarism, as has often been alleged, we hear the highest encomiums bestowed upon it, as a blessing to both master and servant; the corner-stone of our political edifice; the most perfect type of civilization; entitled to the fostering care of both Church and State; marking a state of social blessedness, if we are to believe its brazen-faced advocates, more nearly resembling Paradise than anything enjoyed on earth since Adam's Paradise was lost.

The friends of truth need not be alarmed at such arrogant pretensions; they are an indication of encouraging progress in the investigation of truth. Its victory over error is more than half achieved when the issue is thus distinctly presented; when the enemy, driven from his hiding place, exposes himself in the open field of public debate, to a force that always conquers.

Slavery is now on trial before a jury of the whole American people, who may be relied on to give a righteous verdict in the case, if the truth and the whole truth can be fairly brought before them. Nor is the investigation a doubtful one. The public have only to see slavery as it is, to decide on its character. If it is a beneficent institution, its fruit will show it; if

sin and misery are its legitimate fruits, that also can be shown. "How long halt ye then between two opinions?" If freedom is a blessing, follow it; but if slavery, then follow it.

Having been for ten years a practical overseer, and as such, familiar with the revolting scenes within the walls of this American prison house, I have had opportunity to learn the true character of slavery, to an extent which no other school is able to teach it. Trained in this seminary to slave-driving, rather than driving the quill, and to using the cogent logic of the lash, rather than that of the schools, I must rely on facts alone to rebut the bold assertions of pro slavery advocates. If I have not the power which literary culture imparts, I can put a tongue in ten thousand mouths, made in the slave's bleeding flesh by dogs and the lash, and bid them speak for me.

As a continuous history of my twenty-five years' experience and observation would comprise a tedious repetition of similar scenes, I shall adduce specimens only, such as will present a fair representation of what is constantly done on the best regulated plantations, the discipline of which is conducted on cool, business principles, where the manager is careful not to injure the productive value of his working stock by short feeding, or "giving a lick too much"—a fatality which does sometimes unhappily occur, without design; where the driver's crowding and flogging are to him not a pastime, but a business necessity, designed simply to make his slaves profitable.

In relating facts, I shall scrupulously aim to avoid all exaggeration, and state nothing which I am not willing to affirm

under oath ; facts which I can corroborate by reference to the particular times, places, and persons connected with their occurrence, a private register of which will be preserved for the purpose, if such corroboration should ever be required. In repeating from memory the utterances of individuals, exact *verbal* accuracy will not, of course, be expected.

My experience as an overseer has opened to my mind some important things relative to slavery in our country, which are seldom learned in any other school. It has taught me, first, that the cruelties practiced on the plantation are very partially known, even at the South. Nor is it strange that it should be so. How little does the swarming population of a large city know of what is done and suffered within the walls of the Penitentiary planted in their midst, or in the ten thousand abodes of wretchedness and vice that surround them ! As little can the outsiders of a cotton plantation be expected to know what is going on within, especially when such disclosures are suppressed by gag law, which either the slave or white employee violates at his peril. The slave-owner himself is not an exception to this remark. So long as his overseer gives him a good crop, it is for the comfort, both of his heart and conscience, to know as little as possible of the anguish from which it was wrung out for him. To flog the slaves in his presence, or in the presence of strangers, would be an offensive breach of politeness, and for the same reason he would not have his overseer render to him any account of his floggings, except when necessary. Much less would he have the tender sensibilities of his family tortured with the relation of such revolting scenes. Hence there is necessarily a profound ignorance of the true character of slavery, both North and South ; and the northern traveler who thinks to stop the mouths of anti-slavery croakers, by publishing the results of his extensive observations at the South, is simply a "traveled fool," as my narrative will show.

Nor will the slave himself expose the miseries of his condition. Oppression always makes sycophants of its victims, whose fear renders them the more obse-

quious to their oppressor, and the more prompt to do his will, the more cruelly they are crushed by his power. It is curious to see with what alacrity slaves will perform for the overseer all the drudgery of slave government, capturing fugitives, betraying their hiding-places, reporting their complaints, threats, discontents, or plots, and doing all the flogging and field-driving for him. He has only to give the word, and they are "swift to do his will." It is not the love of domineering, or the want of compassion for their suffering companions, so much as simple fear that prompts them to this service. The same fear of the lash that stimulates the laborer, nerves also the arm that wields it. It is the same fear that compels recreant Northerners, when settled at the South, to be foremost in persecuting their own kin, suspected of abolitionism, in order to screen themselves, if possible, from a like suspicion and persecution. To suppose that a slave, in constant fear of torture, will speak of his wrongs to his oppressor's friend, or express discontent with his lot, and thus expose himself to double vengeance, is simply absurd.

Second. My slave driving experience has further taught me that cruelty is an essential element of slave government, even on the best regulated plantations—that the blood-extorting lash is the life blood of the system. Those who think it can be dispensed with, mistake both the nature of slavery and of slave government. I labored under the same mistake myself, until I was led to realize that the peculiar condition of the slave rendered the cruelty of the lash a necessary incentive to obedience and activity. The slave is required to put forth his utmost energies from early dawn till the darkness of night shuts down upon him. This is the law of the cotton plantation. To expect him to obey it without a stimulus, is to look for an effect without an adequate cause. Labor demands a stimulus. The stimulus of the freeman is gain, or the hope of it ; that of the slave, the lash, or the fear of it. Take away the stimulus of wages, the hope of gain, the necessities of a dependent family, provision against future want, and you have left him no motive, within his own bosom, for earnest exer-

tion. The only motive he can feel is that which is applied to his quivering flesh. It is not his nature, it is the condition to which slavery has reduced him, that makes the stimulus of the lash indispensable.

And yet this very condition has become a stereotyped pro-slavery argument at the South. To be relieved from the care of a dependent family, and of providing against future wants, and of procuring physician and medicine in sickness, by a master who assumes all this care himself, is often spoken of as an enviable condition; as if it were the perfection of the slave's felicity to extinguish his domestic affections by relieving him of the care that cherishes them, and thus take away all moral incentives to labor, and render the torture of the lash an indispensable substitute!

Husbands and fathers, you have only to commit your tender charge to the protection of a slave master, and he will feed, and clothe, and doctor them for you, work and drive, and flog them to your heart's content, and, if cupidity or necessity require, sell them forever out of your sight and hearing, and thus insure you against all future care of them. Who does not see that this boasted felicity of the slave's condition is one of the inherent abominations of the system, showing that in its brightest aspects it is only evil, and that continually. What aggravates the case, this moral destitution is, on the other hand, urged in justification of the cruelties inflicted on him. He is so perversely indolent, it is alleged, that nothing but the fear of the lash will make him work. Rob him of all the kindly impulses of his nature, and then reproach him and torture his flesh because he is incapable of being moved by those impulses.

Third. Those who think cruelty is not essential to slave government, because it is extensively dispensed with among house servants, and in the border slave States, are ignorant of the motive that restrains these favored slaves. The Southern plantation is a house of correction for every refractory slave in all the slave States, the influence of which is felt to the uttermost bounds of the slave empire. The horrors of the cotton plantation are a subject of

universal dread among slaves. If disobedient or thriftless, they know their doom; the slave trader is about, ready to purchase and transport them to a region where their insubordination will be effectually whipped out of them. Abolish the whipping and driving cruelties of the plantation, and you abolish slave government everywhere.

Nor is the lord of the lash, the immediate agent of this cruelty, to be accounted a sinner above all others connected with the system. Crowding and flogging are to him a necessity. He must either harden his heart for the rigorous execution of this duty, or quit his employment; for leniency to the slaves will bring his employer no cotton. To make slave labor profitable, the stimulus of the whip must be vigorously and cruelly applied. Of all the numerous cotton plantations which have come under my cognizance, I have yet to find the first solitary one that could dispense with this necessary incentive. Besides, the overseer's severity, as we have shown, is the basis of the whole fabric of slave government; he is an executive official of slave law, no less necessary than judges, marshals, and sheriffs are for the execution of State laws. If slave government is right, as the ministers of both law and Gospel teach us, then the revolting inflictions of those officials, which are the main pillars of such government, are right. They simply do the bidding of those reverends and honorables who justify and cherish the system. Let the censure fall, then, without respect to persons, on these higher officials, as well as their humbler subordinates.

Every reverend advocate of the cruel system who pleads the sanction of the Bible in its support, inflicts more stripes upon its tortured victims than a whole army of overseers. His pretended proclamation of God's word and will nerves the arm of the slave driver, and furnishes him the authority he wants to exercise his cruel function. I have often heard the hardened infidel slave driver tauntingly boast of this authority to his slave church member, as he was laying on the lash, using language too horribly blasphemous to repeat, and seeming to delight in such an opportunity to curse Christian-

ty, its Author, its teachers, and its professors.

Admit that overseers are a most depraved class of men, steeped in such vices as swearing, drinking, fighting, and the most barefaced licentiousness. Admit, also, that such depravity deserves no palliation or excuse. What then? Are they the only persons implicated in the guilt? This vile offspring has a responsible parentage. Who nurtures the tree that brings forth such evil fruit? Not the cruelties only, but the vices of the overseer, which his profession cherishes, may be justly fathered upon the teacher of a religion that spreads the ægis of its sanction over this prolific mother of abominations.

These things premised, I propose to enter on the details of my narrative in subsequent numbers.

CHAPTER II.

Hardening Influences.

"Vice is a monster of such hideous mien,
That to be hated, needs but to be seen;
But seen too oft, familiar with her face,
We first endure, then pity, then embrace."

To no vice can these lines of Cowper be more truthfully and emphatically applied than to that of slaveholding oppression, as my own sad experience can bear witness. On this principle alone can I account for the fact that millions of humane and liberty-loving people of this nation, multitudes of them professing a religion whose fundamental law is love, can tolerate in our midst that atrocious system of chattelism, under which four millions of our fellow-citizens and human brethren are now groaning. Nor is it strange that those who overlook the hardening effect, upon the heart and conscience, of familiarity with crime and cruelty, should denounce our political and religious pretensions, and professed sympathy with the oppressed of other nations as shameless hypocrisy; and that the oppressive governments of Europe should tauntingly admonish us to "pluck the beam from our own eye," before we presume to interfere with that infinitely

milder form of oppression which they practice.

But while experience has taught me more of the atrocities of the vile system than the masses, either North or South, ever dreamed of, it has taught me also a lesson of forbearance, my own mind having passed through the same hardening process which the poet so accurately describes. When I first saw the lash applied to the writhing victim, heard the savage oaths of the time-hardened driver, and the pitiful cries of the poor slave, begging for mercy of one who knows no mercy, and whose interest forbade him to show it; his unfeeling jeers over the intense agony of the prostrate sufferer, rising upon his toes at every lick, to increase its cruel force, and "let the claret out of the infernal nigger;" the sight filled me with horror, my blood boiled with indignation, and with clenched fist and gnashing teeth, I longed to wreak vengeance on the incarnate demon, never dreaming that under the same malignant influences I should one day be found reenacting the same cruelties. Had some prophetic monitor warned me of this at that time, my heart would have indignantly replied, in the language of Hazael to the prophet Elisha, "Is thy servant a dog, that he should do this great thing?" No amount of money would then have tempted me thus to flog a poor helpless slave.

The scene to which I here allude was on the plantation of a Mr. L., of Louisiana, in the autumn of 1833, where I was employed as a mechanic. This was the first year of my residence in a slave State. I had removed the spring previous from central Ohio to Natchez, impelled by the same sad necessity which has caused many a northern invalid to seek the sanitary influence of a milder climate.

It was in Natchez Mr. L. found me; and being pleased with specimens of my workmanship which he witnessed, engaged me in his service. His plantations—he owned three separate ones, managed by as many overseers—were on the Mississippi, north of Red river. This section of the State was the field of my observation and experience. Mr. L. was a man of standing, extensively known and respected in that community as an intelli-

gent and prosperous planter, who treated his slaves well, according to southern ideas of good treatment—that is, kept them in good working condition, and did not break them down and injure their productive value, as bad managers sometimes do, by short feeding or excessive driving.

Here I learned, for the first time, what slavery is; what six months' residence in Natchez had given me no conception of. I had every day seen the negro cowering and trembling under the frowns of supercilious masters, without daring to utter a breath of remonstrance against such indignities. But the incidents of slavery were "trifles light as air," compared with that cold-hearted and systematic torture which is an essential element of plantation discipline. The impression made on my mind by the first flogging scene I witnessed on Mr. L.'s plantation, the lapse of thirty years has not been able to efface. I seem to hear, at this moment, the terrific crack of the overseer's heavy whip; I see the struggling victims stretched out on the ground, face downward, receiving their hundred lashes each, laid on with all the force which the driver's strong and practiced arm would command; I hear their piteous cries for mercy, as the lash came down upon their naked flesh, and the driver's unfeeling curses and savage glee over their sufferings, expressed in language too foul and blasphemous to be repeated. I would like to have had some of our proslavery reverends listen, for once, to the dialogue I heard on the occasion referred to, and then see if they could repel the charge of cruelty, and pronounce slavery "good, and only good."

"Oh! pray, massa! Do! pray! Do, massa, pray! dis time! O, my God! Lord help dis slave! O, my massa! we could not help it—we could not, my massa. Dem young oxen break down de fences, massa; dat am truff—dat it am, massa."

The driver, meanwhile, laying on the lash and belching out oaths and obscenity, tells them, "The oxen had no business to break down the fence, and get away with their yokes on. Business must go ahead all the time, and must never go a

lick back, so long as *I* manage this plantation. If it does, Mr. Nigger's hide must pay the penalty. Do you hear that, Mr. Niggers?"

"Yes, massa, we hear dat; and your business sha'n't go any licks back, dat it sha'n't, massa, if dese niggers can help it."

"Gather up your clothes, then, and strike a trot until those oxen are brought back from the stock range."

"Yes, massa, yes—thankee; we bring him back, quick," answered the negroes, frightened into alacrity.

These two slaves were thus cruelly flogged, because two yoke of young oxen had broken down the ox-lot fence during the night, and returned to the cattle range.

No cruelty in slavery! "Good, and only good!"

This driver would, to a stranger, appear to be the victim of uncontrollable rage; but it was not so; it was policy, not passion, that governed him. His object was to stimulate the fear of his slaves to the highest point of efficiency. Enter into private conversation with him, even while he is affecting all this rage and fury towards his slaves, and you will find him perfectly bland and unexcited. More than that, this savage overseer might have been taken for a model gentleman of the southern school, intelligent, dignified, affable, of polished manners, genial, courteous, generous and hospitable. In his profession he ranked No. 1; commanded a salary of \$1500 by his wise and efficient management; won the respect of a wide circle of cotton growing acquaintances; and was extensively quoted, and gazetted even, for his model plantation and model management. If the reader should know how he acquired so amiable a reputation, I have only to refer him to scenes similar to the one above described, as prominent among the causes that built him up. Had he been a lenient or indulgent slave-driver, his fame and his fortune would have come up minus. As a man of business, shrewdness and energy, he understood this well, and was unwilling to sacrifice his interest to his humanity. Hence his cruelties are to be fathered upon the system rather than upon the man.

CHAPTER III.

Daily Routine.

It was the cotton-gathering season, and I often went out on the plantation at night, to witness the weighing and summing up of the day's work. The following is a description of the first scene of the kind I witnessed.

When the overseer reached the place for weighing, he called out to the black driver, who was following his gang, whip in hand, "Bring in the cotton." Instantly I saw the slaves hurrying up to their baskets, and emptying their sacks into them. Two or three wagons were on the turn-row, ready to receive the cotton when weighed. The black driver adjusted the scales, and then called out, "All ready, sir." Several slaves immediately jumped into the large wagon bed, made for carting cotton, to empty the baskets and tramp down the cotton. One slave with a lantern seated himself on the side of the wagon to examine the baskets as they were emptied, to see that there were no pumpkin, clods, or other substances secreted in them to increase their weight. Another, who had been taught the numbers on the balance, prepared to weigh, and another, who had learned the numbers on the baskets, stood ready to announce the number of each basket as it was put on the scales. One set of hands stood ready to drag up the baskets and lift them on the scales, and another to lift them off when weighed, and dump them into the large wagon bed. The overseer, with a large folding slate in his hand, which contained the name and number of each working slave, with a record of the amount of cotton gathered by each one for two or three previous days, is seated on a basket, where he can see the figures on the balance, and detect any attempt to deceive him in the weight. All things thus arranged, he calls out, "Weigh, in a little less than no time!" The slave who announces the number of the basket on the scales, cries out "Fifty, sir," and the one who takes account of the weight, responds, "One hundred and seventy-five, sir." The overseer compares the number with the record of previous days, and orders the black driver, who

stood ready, with whip in hand, to give No. 50, fifty lashes, "d—d well put on." "She ought to have had over two hundred pounds such a day as this—a moist day, no wind, and better cotton to gather in than yesterday." He declares, in tones which send terror through all their hearts, and with oaths and epithets too vile to print, that he will flog every nigger that has not more cotton to-day than he had yesterday. No. 50 *begs* for mercy—"dis one time, massa! Head and back hurts me so bad!"

"Go to the black driver, you infernal b—h, and he'll cure your aches and pains! The cotton is wasting in the field—the weather is good for gathering it—cotton must come, shall come, or Mr. Nigger's hide must pay the penalty!"

Another, who was sent to the black driver, pleaded that the skin was worn off his "fum and finger." The overseer cursed his thumb and finger, and charged the driver to give him "*particular* hell," and learn him to take care of his thumb and fingers. The black driver ordered them, one after another, in their turn, to "shell off and come down," (*i. e.*, to strip and lie down,) to receive the execution of the overseer's sentence. When any one instinctively put up his hand to protect his flesh from the blood-extracting lash, the driver called on other slaves to stretch him out, and hold his hands and feet.

As the female slaves came down, they gathered their clothes up to their waist, and lay flat on their faces. If any one refused, or did not keep her clothes out of the way of the lash, two or three women were ordered to put her in the vice, when one instantly planted her knees on the ground, secured the victim's head between them, drew her clothes up so as to confine her arms, and lay bare her back for the driver's lash, while two others stretched out her feet and held them.

I have seen from one to thirty slaves flogged after this manner, at one cotton-weighing. As fast as the wagons were loaded, they were driven off to the cotton-gin, and when the last wagon was loaded, the slaves all hurried to the gin-house. Here their first business was to gather up in large baskets the cotton that had been sunned that day, and carry it up two

flights of stairs, into the gin-house. This done, the wagons were unloaded, and their contents spread upon the scaffolds that had just been cleared, to be ready for sunning the next day.

Their day's work thus finished, they all repair, in haste, to their respective cabins, calling at the cook-house for their pone, (corn bread), which constitutes their allowance for supper, to be washed down with water. From this time no slave is permitted to leave his cabin until the first bell rings in the morning. The second morning bell, which is the signal for turning out to work, is rung at the earliest dawn; when the men, boys, girls and women that have no small children, are at once marshaled and on their way to the cotton-field; and the women who have young children are hurried off with them to the children's house, where the little things are committed to the charge of an old slave appointed for the purpose, who makes the larger children take care of the helpless ones. Here the nursing mothers were set to gathering cotton near the house, and the rest sent after the gang. The children under three months old were to be nursed four times a day; between three and six months, three times; from six to nine months, twice a day; and once a day thereafter until weaned, at the end of twelve months.

This species of slave stock is too valuable to be exposed to careless or unskillful management. The old nurse has her rules laid down, which she must rigidly observe. Care is taken that the mother does not nurse her infant while her blood is heated by toiling in the sun.

When the dew is off, an old female slave brings out all the children over six, to gather cotton. In her hand is a bundle of switches, "to teach the young idea how to shoot," though she stimulates them more with other appliances than with the rod; such as the fear of the overseer and black driver, and encouraging them to race with one another in cotton picking. These juvenile laborers are generally between the ages of six and ten; all over ten go out with the main gang.

The dews are very heavy in the Mississippi Valley. When nearly off, the slaves' breakfast comes out in a cart. It con-

sists of a box of bread and meat, accompanied with a barrel of water. The black driver then calls to the slaves to bring their cotton to the baskets, change their wet clothes and get their breakfast; the prescribed allowance of which he deals out to each one, while they seat themselves on the ground to eat.

Their dinner is brought out and distributed in like manner, about one o'clock.

The above is a fair specimen of life on a cotton plantation, during the cotton-picking season, which extends through a period of about four months. Other crops, such as corn, peas and pumpkins, are also to be gathered during a part of the same period. This is generally done in wet weather, when cotton could not be dried, if picked.

Toward the close of the cotton-picking season, when the weather becomes cold and wet, and the slaves need more blood-stirring exercise to protect them from such diseases as colds, rheumatism and pneumonia, the men are set to making rails, clearing land and ditching, and the females to clearing off the stalks from the corn and cotton fields.

When a slave is sick, he applies to the overseer, who examines his pulse and tongue, and if inflammatory symptoms appear, sends him to the sick-house, to the care of an old slave, who gives him such medicine as the overseer prescribes. But if no *visible* symptoms of disease can be detected, he turns a deaf ear to all his complaints, curses and sometimes flogs him for playing *possum* to deceive him, and drives him out to his hard toil, weeping and groaning, perhaps with *real* disease and suffering. Should he appeal to the black driver, as his last resort, for pity and favor, his reply would probably be: "Do you tink I is a fool, nigger, to let white folks cut up my hide? No, sir-ee—dis nigger not goin' to be kotched in dat manner. If you not able to work, go to white folks, and if white folks send you back to work, you am got to work. Dat am dis nigger's business wi' dis whip. So don't fool you time gruntin' to dis nigger, I tell you—'cause if you does, you is goin' to grunt more worse 'en dat, firs' ting you know."

Now, suppose this to be a case of *real*,

and not feigned sickness and suffering, and there are multitudes of just such cases, who is responsible for this atrocious cruelty? Not the poor black driver, surely; he is impelled by inexorable necessity. Is it the overseer? Should he adopt a different course, his occupation would be gone; his work would never be done; every slave that could get rid of work by feigning sickness would be sure to do it. No; it is the *system* which is the legitimate source of all this cruelty; a system which has been blasphemously lauded as the offspring of God, and indicative of the highest type of civilization!

Voluntary labor, stimulated by hope or desire, has no occasion to feign sickness. The question of ability to work may be safely left to the laborer himself. But the victim of coerced labor cannot be trusted thus; his driver must decide the question for him, and he is very liable to decide it cruelly, though unintentionally. But in charging this cruelty upon the system, which is a mere abstraction, we charge it, by implication, upon all who sustain the system, either directly or by connivance.

CHAPTER IV.

Well Managed Plantations.

OUR last sketch left the reader on one of the plantations of Mr. L., of Louisiana, the first one on which the writer was ever employed as a mechanic. This was considered one of the best managed plantations in the parish, for which no small part of the credit was due to the intelligence, skill and business energy of his faithful overseer, by whom his slaves were well fed, well clothed, well housed, well cared for in sickness and in the tender age of infancy and childhood; and, it may be added, *well worked*, and *well flogged* for any delinquency or slackness.

The allowance of food for each working slave was half a pound of pork a day, taken with corn bread and water for breakfast, with the addition of vegetables for dinner. These meals are taken in the field, as described in a former number.

On this plantation there were from one hundred and twenty to one hundred and

thirty cotton-pickers to be thus fed, besides the infirm, the small children, and others that were at home in their quarters. The food was prepared at the slaves' quarters by the cook, who provided the aggregate allowance for the whole gang, divided into as many equal parts as the gang numbered. The slaves provide themselves with tin buckets or gourds, according to their means, in which to receive respectively their allowance, as it is dealt out to families and individuals. The allowance for supper, as before noticed, was simply corn bread and water, the slaves sometimes reserving a portion of the pot liquor, which comes with their breakfast and dinner, to sop their bread in at night. The supper is the only meal taken at their quarters. This is what, in southern parlance, is called good feeding.

For summer clothing the men received each one cheap palmetto hat, one Lowell cotton shirt, two pairs of pants of Lowell cotton, one pair of shoes; the women, one cotton handkerchief, one cotton under garment, two cotton coats, and one pair of shoes. For winter, the men received each two cotton shirts, one linsey-woolsey jacket, one pair of pants of the same cloth, one pair of shoes, and once in two years, a cheap cotton felt hat. The winter allowance for the women was one cotton head-kerchief, two cotton undergarments, one linsey-woolsey coat, and one pair of shoes. Skirts they make for themselves, if they have them, by patching the fragments of worn out clothes. Each working slave was allowed one cheap blanket every second year.

On Monday morning they were all required to turn out with their cotton clothes well washed, or receive twenty-five lashes. Sunday is their washing-day. Some take the night for it, after their day's work is completed. I afterwards found that the plantation regulations varied among different owners and overseers, some of whom give out their slaves' allowance on Sunday for the whole week, three and a half pounds of meat, and a peck of corn meal, which the slaves cooked for themselves at night. This was, however, found to be bad economy, inasmuch as the labor of cooking encroached upon their needful hours of rest, and thus

impaired their health and strength and their productive power. It was therefore superseded on large and well regulated plantations, by a common cooking-establishment where the meals were well cooked and at seasonable hours, by an old and experienced slave.

Planters generally worked their slaves from day-break until dark, with no other intermission than the short time required for a hasty breakfast and dinner; except that during a part of June and July, up to the time of cotton-gathering, a recess of two hours in the midst of the day was allowed them.

Mr. L's slaves were comfortably housed. Their quarters consisted of small one-story frame tenements of two rooms each, to accommodate two families, with a chimney in the center. They are weather boarded, and have a tight board floor, a comfort with which negro quarters are not always furnished, without ceiling, lining or windows, except wooden shutters. These buildings, arranged in two or more rows, placed at equal distances from each other, of uniform style and size, all white-washed, present to the beholder an attractive appearance, somewhat resembling a neat New England village. Add to this the cleanly appearance of the slaves on Monday morning, with their newly washed garments of Lowell cotton, and we have a specimen of Dr. Adams' South-side View, "beautiful outwardly," like the "whited sepulchres" spoken of by our Savior. To infer from this show of order and beauty, that comfort and happiness reign within, would be about as rational as a like conclusion drawn from the appearance of the splendid edifice which contains the manacled prisoner.

Such were the negro quarters on the best regulated plantations in the region where I resided. On other places they were mean, uncomfortable log cabins, with the ground for a floor.

As to furniture, it is such as the slaves can make a shift to provide for themselves, as nothing of the kind is included in their allowance. A large gourd serves them for a bucket, a small one for a dipper; a rudely constructed bench or stool, for a chair, and a like rude construction or a

box for a table. Their lodging is either on the floor, wrapped in their blanket, or in a rough bunk framed in a corner of their cabins, or on master's old cast off bedstead. Their beds, if any are able to obtain that luxury, consist mostly of corn shucks enclosed in a tick of old cotton sacks, or the patched fragments of their tattered garments, while a very few who have means purchase new ticking. A wooden tray, of their own manufacture, serves the double purpose of platter and plate for the family table, and in eating they illustrate the common saw, that "fingers were made before forks, and hands also before knives and spoons." One knife for a family, either pocket or case-knife, is about as indispensable as farming tools on a plantation. In the furniture of different cabins, however, there are grades of variety and style, as well as in the furniture of any other community; each family providing itself with conveniences and elegancies, such as knives and forks, and plates and dishes of crockery or tin-ware, as means permit and taste dictates. Such cooking implements as a pot, kettle or skillet, are among their rarities; the embers of the hearth for their ash pone, and the hoe for baking hoe-cake, subserve the most of their cooking purposes, on plantations where they have no general cooking establishment.

For washing, a tub, block, and paddle, beside a stream, lake or bayou, answer every purpose. The fire of the hearth serves them in the place of lamps or candles. Their fuel they gather and cut for themselves, when timber land is near, or have it hauled by the teamster when it is far off.

The slaves' pecuniary means are derived from a variety of sources; such as raising chickens; working for wages on Sunday, when work crowds; cultivating patches of their own on Sundays, an indulgence with which overseers sometimes stimulate their best slaves; and female prostitution, in which line many of the fairest of the sex do a very profitable business with wealthy paramours.

Sunday is the slave's own day, on all well regulated plantations, except so much of it as their owner may require of them for washing and mending clothes,

sharpening and repairing tools, and other necessary preparations for the plantation work of the ensuing week, which must not be interrupted by these incidental avocations. Whatever work of their own they have to do must be done on this day, for the six days' labor, from early dawn to the shutting down of night, is all claimed by their owner. The Lord's day is the slave's day, in which to labor and do all his own work, and some of his master's, while the six are consecrated days—consecrated exclusively to the service of his earthly owner. The Sabbath is the day for him to work for wages, cultivate his own patch, gather moss for the market, market his chickens and his little crop of vegetables, and fit up or repair the rude comforts of his own cabin. All this work of his own and his master's, crowded upon this single day, makes it a poor day of rest for the slave.

On another of Mr. L.'s well managed plantations, where I was likewise employed as a mechanic, Mr. G. was overseer, who had the reputation of being an excellent manager. Indeed, it was in all respects similar to the management of the overseer on the first named plantation, and between the two there was a constant strife to outdo each other at cropping. This spirit of emulation, I afterwards found, was common to all the overseers in that region, which made them furious Jehus at slave-driving. This may be sport, or at least gain, to the competitors, but suffering sorrow to their panting human teams. Not that they are regardless of the life and health of their slaves. They are as careful to keep them in good condition as to get "the last lick" of work out of them, for one is subservient to the other. Their ambition is to secure the greatest possible amount of gain to their employers, and thus obtain for themselves good situations and large salaries; and, like the stock-growing farmer, they think as much of improving the value of the planter's human stock, as of his crops. No pains are spared to make the negroes strong and healthy, and to rear a numerous and vigorous offspring. In the latter respect their care is often excessive—I mean excessively severe. Mr. G., the overseer last named, told me

that his rule was to give a slave mother one hundred lashes, if she lost her child; as if a mother's affection were not inducement enough to secure watchfulness and care on her part, and a mother's anguish at the death of her child not sufficiently intense, without the addition of this terrible scourging!

Mr. G.'s care of the health and condition of his negroes did not spare their hides, as their scarred backs gave unmistakable proof. I noticed on the plantation he managed, a large number of slaves who had been so cut up with the lash that their backs were marked with scars and welts from their shoulders to their heels. I was surprised and shocked at the amount of whipping which I witnessed myself on this plantation. I rode out, one day, with the overseer, to their field of labor. They were cutting timber, and getting out rails. A number of them, whose movement did not please him, were ordered to shell off and come down, to have their activity quickened with the driver's excruciating lash.

One Sunday morning I witnessed a punishment of a very different kind. The vigilant overseer had, the night before, caught a slave in the act of cooking a pig he had stolen. He was immediately taken to the stocks, and there fastened by the neck till the next morning. After breakfast, the overseer ordered his black driver to bring the culprit to his house, along with the pot of pig he had cooked.

"Shell off your clothes, sir, and sit down!"

"The poor fellow trembled, and rolled his eyes in a wild manner, as if watching an opportunity to break away. But the presence of the driver, with his heavy loaded whip ready to knock him down, if he made the attempt, precluded all hope of escape. The overseer taunted him, and bade him help himself to the contents of the pot as fast as possible. When he ceased, because he could eat no more, the raw hide was applied to his bare back, and the meat, grease and soup, were forced down him until his abused stomach disgorged its contents. This only aggravated his punishment, as he was compelled to swallow again what his stomach threw off, and this process of vomiting

and swallowing it again was continued, alternated with scourging, until it seemed as if the poor fellow would die under the operation.

Another method of punishment for a like offense was adopted by Mr. M., the over-seeer of Col. B. The pig-stealer was compelled to wear a ham of fresh pork lashed to his shoulders like a knapsack, without any relief from the burden, night or day, until the flesh dropped from the bones. The sickening stench of the putrid meat which the victim was compelled perpetually to inhale, and the annoyance of the swarms of flies which it attracted, in fly time, together with the long process of decomposition, rendered this the most intolerable punishment!

The overseer on another plantation boasted to his brother overseers, who applauded him for his skill in managing niggers, that he had compelled a slave to eat the whole of a duck which he had stolen, feathers, entrails, every thing but the wings. The same overseer drove a slave into the river, where he was drowned. He became notorious, indeed, for his outrages upon the defenseless blacks. But he bore the character of "an excellent cropper, who could make a nigger travel about right. This alone was sufficient to cover a multitude of sins. Mammon is a cruel god, when humanity crosses his path; it is then he becomes a Moloch.

Another of the legitimate effects of slavery was exhibited on Mr. L.'s third plantation, in which the overseer suspended a slave by his thumbs and great toes to the limb of a peach-tree, and whipped him to death. To escape punishment, he crossed over into Mississippi, and remained there until the grand jury had finished their report of criminal cases for the next court. This case excited a great deal of sympathy in the neighborhood, not for the poor murdered slave, but for the murderer, because he was compelled by this unhappy occurrence to leave a good situation, while his employer kept back his wages to indemnify himself for the property he had thus lost.

CHAPTER V.

A Mississippi Plantation—Runaways.

I now crossed over into the State of Mississippi, and worked on three plantations belonging to Capt. T. who was considered a model planter in that section of country. Mr. N. was the overseer of one of these plantations. It was the spring season, and the slaves were then cultivating the crop. It was a painful sight to one not hardened to such cruelties, to watch those overdriven slaves at their work. The old and decrepit slaves among the rest were obliged to give their constant licks, with their heavy hoes, from morning light until dark. They were not permitted to straighten up and rest themselves, but when one row was finished, they swept around in haste to commence another. From some of their wounds made by the lash, I could see the matter oozing out through their clothes, which were stiff and stained by it. Some of these poor creatures, who were sore with their wounds, would groan with pain whenever they stumped their toes, so as to jar their bodies. Sometimes, when the overseer had flogged a slave, and he did not afterwards move quick enough to suit him, he would tell the slave he was not right yet, and order him to shell off and come down again; he would "make him step lighter when he was let up the next time." The slave would beg the overseer to "just try him that once, and he would step right, that he would," when the overseer would sometimes tell him to "trot then, and raise a song," so as to enliven the gang, who would answer him with a cheerful chorus. At other times, the overseer would ask a slave, whom he had flogged, to raise a good laugh, and then he should be certain that he had put him in a good humor by flogging him. If a stranger, unacquainted with this forced cheerfulness among the slaves, had passed the plantation when they were singing one of these lively corn songs, they might have supposed these poor creatures were giving vent to the overflowings of their surplus happiness. When Mr. N. thought that any of the slaves did not let themselves out to the utmost, he would point them to some

other slave, and tell them to keep up their rows even with his; and if they could not do it, he would tell the black driver to give them a certain number of lashes when they came out to the end of the row; for by flogging them among the cotton, some of the plants would have been injured. He would order the dose to be repeated at the end of each row, until they let themselves out properly. This, I found, was the cause of a large number of slaves running away, both in picking cotton and in cultivating the crop, as they could not possibly come up to the overseer's required amount of labor, and could not endure the thought of receiving another flogging on their old sores.

But a slave will not run away unless he is driven almost to desperation, because he dreads the risk of being recaptured, and receiving a fugitive's punishment. He is also distressed at the thought of leaving his family behind him, especially if he has a young and handsome wife, who he knows will be at the mercy of the overseer. I have heard overseers swear that it was their rule to take all the fugitives' wives that were good-looking, for themselves, while the fugitives were gone. A runaway slave knows that even his fellow-slaves will do their utmost to recapture him when he is out, and this for three reasons: First, because the same amount of work must be done on the plantation; consequently it comes harder upon those who remain at home. Second, it is dangerous for any of the slaves to see or feed a fugitive, for when he is recaptured and confined in the stocks, receiving his repeated floggings, and the overseer questions him on these points, he is almost sure to confess all that has taken place during his absence, and sometimes more. I have seen slaves hold out for some time before they would tell who had fed them while they were at large; but when their backs had become so sore that the whole body would quiver as they saw the lash being raised, they would generally confess every thing, though it might involve wife and child, and cause them to be flogged also. Third, it is the custom to give any slave that may recapture a fugitive, or give such information as may lead to his recapture, five dollars

and upwards. This is a great temptation to a slave, who is glad to get that amount in order to purchase a calico dress for his wife, or a calico coat or headkerchief for his child. I have heard fugitives say that when they were in the wood, every thing that moved frightened them, as well as every noise they heard, because they did not know but the dogs might be on their trail and close upon them. These fears cause many of the fugitives to return and deliver themselves up to the mercy of their owners or overseers. I saw one fugitive receive the customary protracted punishment on this place. He was secured to the stocks by the neck and two wrists, and received a certain number of lashes daily. When the grim overseer had laid on the allotted number, he told the victim to make himself as comfortable as possible, until he returned to dress his wounds on the following day. There is a sort of "devil-may-care" manner among these time-hardened overseers, and an obscene kind of slang used by them, that dreadfully shock any one not accustomed to their society. This old slave was ordered to wash his wounds with lime water; sometimes strong brine is used, and I have seen some apply red pepper and whisky. These washes are used for two reasons: first, to increase the victim's pain; and second, to cause the ulcerated wound to dry up and scab over. I saw this cruel-hearted overseer take a splintered white oak switch, and checker the wounds of this fugitive something as a piece of pork is checkered before roasting. One day, when I had gone with him into the stock room to see this fugitive flogged, I asked him whether he was not afraid of mortification if he continued the daily flogging. He answered, No, because a few charcoal poultices would arrest inflammation, and cause the bruised portion to slough off; and if he did die, it would make but little difference, as he was an old runaway rascal. When a slave was severely flogged, it was the rule to give him a good dose of salts, to cool his blood, and guard against inflammation. Before the fugitives were put to work again, they were ironed with some of the customary manacles, which they were obliged to wear from one to

six months. These manacled slaves were guarded during the day by some of their fellow-slaves, who watched them home, and saw them safely in the stocks at night.

According to the rules of this model cotton plantation, which the overseer must enforce or be discharged, if a slave failed to reach his work when the gang commenced at day-break, the black driver gave him twenty-five lashes; if he was found working with a dull tool, he received twenty-five lashes; if he broke that tool or implement, twenty-five lashes; should the root which broke the plough have been out of sight, it made no difference, twenty-five lashes. Should the mule's shoulder become sore and galled with one of their mean shuck collars, the ploughman received twenty-five lashes, and lay in the stocks at night until he had cured the mule's shoulder, the animal working meantime as usual. If a slave did not come out on Monday morning with his clothes clean and mended, he received twenty-five lashes, repeated every morning until the clothes were washed. I asked the overseer if he thought it was right to flog a slave for an accident? He answered that it was not his business to know any thing about accidents.

The other large cotton plantations owned by Capt. T. were all managed in the same manner and governed by the same rules; consequently, it would only be a repetition of the same scenes and cruelties to describe them. On one of his other places something had been stolen. The slaves were all called up, and ordered to form a line, when the flogging commenced at the head of the line, and continued until the thief confessed her fault, which she did only when she saw her parents about to be whipped. The slaves who escaped the flogging, said, "Tankee, massa—tankee God ormighty, dat it not reach us dis time."

A brother of his, Major T., who lived near one of the plantations on which I worked, was a perfect madman among his slaves at times. He sent an order to Mr. R. to flog one of his slaves, and to give the rascal the last lick he could live under, because he had not properly secured a gate, and the calves had gone in

with the cows to the cattle-range. The consequence was, that the owner of several hundred slaves had drunk his coffee without milk that morning. Before flogging one of his best working slaves, Mr. R. made some inquiry, and became satisfied that this slave was not guilty of leaving the door unlatched. The old madman heard that the overseer had not obeyed his orders, and he swore that such an overseer should not manage a dog for him any longer. He then rode to the field and ordered Mr. R. "to give that infernal black rascal particular hell." Mr. R. refused, said the slave was not out of the quarters that night, and he should not flog him. The Major then swore that he was the master of that plantation, and that nigger should be flogged. "I had to take my coffee without milk, this morning; so flog the rascal, sir; I say, give him the last lick he can live under; and remember, sir, if he does not deserve it now, he has deserved it, or will deserve it. Make the rascal's hide so that it won't hold shucks, sir!" Mr. R. refused to obey these orders, and Major T. discharged him. He then ordered his black driver to take vengeance on the rascal who had deprived him of the milk for his coffee. I am able to state these particulars minutely, because not having then fully imbibed the views and habits of the slave drivers, the scenes I first witnessed riveted my attention, and made a more lasting impression on my mind than the scenes of after years. It was abhorrent to every feeling of my nature to think of the great difference between this reckless slave-owner and his two or three hundred slaves. The former had drunk his coffee, that morning, without milk, and some slave must be punished for it, right or wrong, guilty or not guilty; while the working portion of the slaves had sat on the ground, in the cotton field, to eat their breakfast of coarse corn bread, made of cornmeal, salt and water, with a slice of fat pork and a gourd of cold water.

CHAPTER VI.

A Wealthy Owner—an Exhorter.

I NOW commenced to work for Mr. P., who owned four large cotton plantations. The discipline on this wealthy gentleman's plantations was altogether in the hands of the overseers; consequently, it varied according to their taste and opinions as to the best mode of obtaining the largest amount of labor from the slaves under their charge. The plantations of Mr. T., mentioned above, were, in fact, managed by himself, and every lash given to his slaves was regulated by his written plantation laws. He kept up a weekly correspondence with all his overseers, and had his own mail, (which was much more regular than the U. S. mails generally are,) to carry that correspondence to and from his several plantations. But Mr. P. did not visit his places more than twice a year, and kept up no regular correspondence with the overseers. The time he usually visited them was in the spring, when the crop had been pitched, that he might examine the condition of the plants, and make some calculations on the prospect for a crop, and again at the commencement of the cotton-gathering season, when he could form a still more accurate estimate of what he might expect. During these visits of their master, the slaves were not allowed to make any complaints to him; indeed, all he cared about was to find his crop looking well, and to see that his slaves were in proper condition to cultivate and gather it; just as a farmer would glance at his team, to ascertain whether it was in good working condition.

I also found that the overseers in this neighborhood took much less pains to conceal their habits of licentious intercourse with the female slaves than those with whom I had previously become acquainted. So little shame was there among them, that it was common for the overseer to order his own fancy girl to bring a young female slave to room with a friend who might come to visit him; and this fancy piece was frequently under the necessity of doing the same thing for the overseer himself.

On one of Mr. P.'s plantations, where

the field was at least three miles long, and the slave-quarters were at one end of it, the slaves were required to be in line in front of the overseer's house, ready to call out their names, an hour before daylight. When they were in their places, the black driver awoke the overseer, and told him all was ready for calling the roll. When the order to go ahead was given, the first slave on the line called out his name loudly, and the rest in turn followed his example. If one was out of place, the black driver accounted for him or her, saying, "Sick, sah;" "Runaway, sah," etc. When the overseer gave the order to travel on, they all called out, "Thankee, sah." When they returned from work at night, the same line was formed, and the roll again called, when, if there were any accounts to settle, the overseer gave the order to the driver to do the flogging. Then the poor slave who had worked all day, must lie that night in the stocks, being fastened in them by the neck or legs. My sleeping room was adjoining the stock-room, and when the savage overseer was gone to bed, the poor slaves with their necks fast in the stocks would tap against the plank partition, and call to me, "Massa Kanic, Massa Kanic, (meaning Mechanic,) jus please hab mercy on dese poor niggers, and raise dem stocks; den you put us neck back when da driver ring de bell; please, Massa Kanic, cause dese niggers am suffer too much." This was a dangerous undertaking; but some nights I could not sleep until I had granted their request, not having been sufficiently accustomed to scenes of cruelty then, and not having any idea that I ever should be. When the first bell rung in the morning, I got up, and raised the stocks, that the victims might replace their necks in them again, and be found all right when the black driver came to take them to work. Flogging was the order of the day on this place, which was managed by an Irishman. His treatment of captured fugitives was more cruel, if possible, than that on Capt. T.'s plantations. I saw him put one of his recaptured victims in the stocks, by his neck and two wrists. The victim was perfectly nude, and lying flat on his abdomen. He then ordered an old slave who

attended to his garden, horse, fires, etc., to put a handful of coarse alum salt on the victim's breech, when he took up a three foot white oak clapboard with both hands, raised it as a rail-splitter would raise his maul, and then brought it down upon the alum salt, crushing the salt into the poor fugitive's flesh. The order was given to lay on more salt, and the powerful overseer again crushed it in with the clapboard, which was of the kind used in the new settlements to cover log-cabins. When the operation was finished, the lacerated wound was washed as I before described; a dose of salts was given to the groaning victim, and he was taken to the blacksmith's shop, where a stiff leg was riveted on him. He was then sent to the plow, where he was compelled to keep up with a fast-walking mule. I witnessed a great many cruel scenes, but it was particularly revolting to see the females flogged with their clothes stripped up to their waist, while their husbands, fathers and brothers, who stood in the line, durst not so much as turn their heads toward them, when they heard their screams for mercy, such as, "Dis one time! Oh! forgive dis poor nigger! Dis one time! My Massa! My Massa!"

The overseer on the second plantation managed much the same as the one I have described. The other two were more humane, but worse, if possible, in their licentious habits. One of them owned ten or twelve slaves himself, and also extended his amours to other plantations in the neighborhood, through the agency of his own female slaves.

I now engaged to work for Mr. S., who had been an exhorter among the Methodists, before he became a slaveholder. He was then living with one of his female slaves, (if not two,) by whom he now has a family of children. He did not possess sufficient control over his temper to flog slaves in a cool, business-like manner, as I had seen the time-hardened overseers flog them, but had to be worked up into a towering passion first; then he would lay hold of the first thing he could put his hands on, and knock down, kick, and abuse his victims in a most brutal manner. On the large plantations where I had been lately at work, the slaves had warm

cabins to live in, and had their food and clothes much as on Mr. L.'s plantation, described above; but Mr. S. fed, housed, and clothed his slaves badly, and constantly abused them, because, as he declared, he treated them better than other slaves were treated by their masters, and yet they treated him worse, robbing him continually. This bad feeding and clothing drove a number of the slaves, who worked at home, to help themselves to their own out of their master's corn-crib and hog-lot. Having thus made a successful commencement, they learned to increase their comforts by extending their operations, so as to trade off a portion of the crib and hog lot for a little flour, coffee, sugar, and tobacco, and also a little whisky, to cheer up their narrow, filthy cabins, which were more like hen-houses than human habitations. Many of the females hired their own time of their master; some of the old slaves paid him ten dollars a month, the younger fifteen or twenty dollars. Besides boarding themselves, these were driven to prostitution to assist them in living a little better than usual, and in paying their master his wages, which must be rendered promptly, no matter how they earned it.

The old man was a great newsmonger, but was too stingy to subscribe for a paper; consequently, when his slaves came home to pay their wages, they had to relate all the gossip of the past week. Every thing that had transpired worthy of notice, from the parlor to the kitchen, was now stuffed into "ole massa's" ears, in hopes of pleasing him, and getting him to give them back a portion of their earnings, to enable them to purchase a handkerchief, a dress, or a pair of shoes.

The crimes of slavery cannot be written, otherwise a flood of light might here be cast on the doings in Southern cities; the jealousies and quarrels in families; the irrepressible conflict between the mistress and her lord, and her good-looking mulatto female slaves; the wide and almost universal extent, especially amongst the young men, of partiality for the good-looking female slaves. I now learned that some slaveholding mistresses charged their female slaves higher wages than they could possibly earn in an honest

manner. Mrs. D. charged this class from one to two dollars a day for their time. One of these female slaves was whiter than her mistress, and paid her two dollars per day, and yet was able to clear sufficient to purchase her freedom. From what I have seen of the female slaves, they are generally inclined to go astray from the paths of virtue; but I fully and conscientiously believe that the crushing, degrading, prostituting influence of slavery is the cause of this downward tendency. For in their youth and virtuous innocence they are no more liable to err, in that respect, than females of other races. At first their seducers order an old female slave to bring the fluttering, innocent one to their foul embraces; or, if they have not the power to order, then they must bribe some lost old hag to do it. When these victims have once fallen, they have no guardians to reclaim them again, and it is no disgrace for them to continue in forbidden paths. It would be labor lost, for parents to try to train up their daughters in a virtuous manner, even if they had been so trained themselves, because one command from a brutish, lustful master, would destroy all their efforts.

Thus it is that a pro-slavery church aids and abets the wicked oppressor in seducing and prostituting temples which it is their duty to prepare for the living God to dwell in; opposing the work in which pure and undefiled Christianity, acting in the Spirit of the Master, delights to be engaged—that of educating, elevating and ennobling the crushed and degraded. And doubtless those who would oppress, crush, degrade, seduce and prostitute any part of the human family, possess a portion of the spirit of him who, in the form of a serpent, brought about the degradation of our race; who would have prevented our elevation by tempting our great Liberator to forego his work of mercy and love, for the world and its allurements; and who, down to the present day, sows such a plentiful crop of tares in the church, that they almost choke out the wheat.

CHAPTER VII.

Manacles and Instruments of Torture.

BEFORE proceeding further with my narrative, I will give a description of the manhood crushing manacles and implements of torture used on the plantations. They are used on the estates of professing Christians, as well as those of non-professors. I have seen several recaptured fugitives working in these irons, under Mr. B., a Methodist of good standing, who knew that his church could not bring him under its discipline for cruelty to slaves.

The Stocks.

The stocks are made with holes in them for the neck and two wrists; also, holes for the ankles. They are generally about ten feet long, and are made of two pieces of plank, say nine inches in breadth by two and a half thick. The circles for the neck, wrist and ankles are cut half out of each plank. These planks are supported by two posts at each end, and are provided with a hinge at one end, and a lock at the other. When the victims are put in or taken out, the upper plank is raised, and their necks or ankles placed in the proper position, when the plank is let down again, and securely locked. There are but few plantations in the section of the South where I am acquainted, which are not provided with stocks. Where the slaves are perfectly crushed and broken in to unresisting obedience and the constant strain of laboring to the utmost extent of their physical powers, without any hope of recompense, stocks and manacles may not be really necessary; but where they have been recently brought from the border States, or from Southern cities, or perhaps have been house servants, or by a change of owners have been transferred from an indulgent master to some Legree of a driver, then stocks and manacles become indispensable, in order to break them in, and accustom them to the "devil-may-care" manner of their new drivers, their longer hours and more straining labor, their much worse fare, and to a life where not the least hope of a brighter day to come looms up before them to alleviate their wretched condition.

The Pillory, or Half-bent Stocks.

In the stocks before described, the victim lies stretched upon the floor of the stock room, but in these he stands up in a half-bent position, the posts being longer, making the height from the ground to the neck-hole, say three and a half feet. They are made after the same plan as the other stocks, but narrower, giving room for two neck and four wrist holes. They are used to punish slaves on Sundays, by putting delinquents in them while the rest of the slaves are in their cabins. They are generally placed in open view, near the slave-cabins.

The Slave-driver's Whip

is a large whip, made of platted rawhide, heavily loaded with lead at the butt, and well calculated for knocking down a resisting slave. Drivers are fond of using the whip, because its loud, sharp crack stimulates every slave within hearing distance, just as the crack of the teamster's lash stimulates his beasts when a straining pull is to be made; the dull one receives the blow, while the sound of the lash is sufficient for the one that is more willing, or thin skinned.

The Sole-Leather Paddle.

This is a piece of sole-leather, about twenty inches long, and as broad as the hand in the widest portion of it. The thinnest end of the leather is secured to a wooden handle by iron rivets. The handle makes it convenient for use, and causes the instrument to play more freely. This is the most silent weapon of torture, but it crushes the flesh deep, making a very painful wound, and slow to heal.

Putting a Slave in the Vice.

When a female slave, who is undergoing a flogging, is in too much pain to keep up her clothes properly out of the way of the lash, two or three female slaves are called to put her in the vice. One slave plants her knees on the ground, holding the victim's head, face downward, between them; she then draws the clothes over the poor creature's head so as to confine her arms, while the others stretch her by holding her feet. Our papers have wasted gallons of ink in representing Aus-

trian cruelties to females, when the Austrians only stripped their coats from their shoulders, and flogged their victims on the back; but it is left to democratic America to put Austria and Naples in the background, when it comes to committing outrages upon the female sex.

Flogging-Stakes.

Threestakes are driven into the ground, two of them sufficiently far apart to stretch out the victim's arms to the widest extent, as he lies flat upon the ground with his face downward. His wrists being bound to these stakes by cords, the third stake is placed so as to secure his legs by the ankles, when he is stretched out at full length. Some slaves are powerful men, and would be dangerous to every one around them, when under the pain of the lash, if they were not well secured.

Barrel Punishment.

A pork barrel is generally used for this species of torture. One head is knocked out, the other divided into two parts, and a half circle, of about five inches in diameter, cut in each, to form a hole for the victim's neck. When the barrel is placed over him, the heading is put in by placing one of the pieces on either side of his neck, closing them together, forcing them into the grooves, and driving on the hoops. The victim's arms are confined in the barrel; he cannot sit nor lie down, and cannot rise again when he is down. Smearing the slave's head with molasses, to attract the flies, gives additional terror to the barrel punishment. Like all the severer kinds of punishment, it is used for disciplining fugitives. I have seen the victim marching around the cabin yard on Sundays, the children drumming him about with sticks, and calling him "mean runaway, runaway, runaway from ole massa an' he work!"

Spread-Eagle Pole.

This pole is about three inches in diameter, and of sufficient length to stretch the victim's arms at right angles to the body; the wrists being bound with cords to the ends of the pole, which is swung to the neck by a rope attached to the center.

The Iron Gag.

This instrument is in the form of a circular iron band, passing through the mouth and round the lower part of the head, being fastened with a lock at the back of the neck. The part which passes through the mouth is a flat piece of iron, about a quarter of an inch thick, and is provided with a tongue-piece, which passes over the tongue, and prevents its moving. On each side of the mouth is a hinge, connecting the side pieces with the one in front. The object of this punishment is to make slaves careful how they talk about white folks' business. Should the Rev. Mr. Adams, or any other aider and abettor of the cruel Legrees and slave-drivers of the South, question these slaves about their master's business, or about their condition on the plantation, the dread of that cold piece of iron lying on their tongues might prevent their giving the reverend gentleman a correct answer; if they did not treat him with silent contempt, for asking them about those secrets of their prison-house which they had been forbidden to expose.

Bell-Irons.

This is the worst of all the manhood-crushing manacles. A large iron band, more than an inch broad and very thick, passes round the body above the hips, with a hinge on one side for the convenience of putting it on and taking it off, and on the other side the ends, where they meet together, are bent outwards to form a flange, through which holes are made for a rivet to fasten it upon the victim. Another band, made in the same manner as the first, passes round the neck. The two are connected by an iron rod which is riveted to the hip-band, and thence ascends along the back, bending in to fit the shoulders and back of the neck, where it is riveted to the neck-band, and is then continued on above the head, to such a height that a cowbell hung upon the end of it may be out of arm's reach of the victim, and bending over sufficiently to allow the bell to swing clear of the upright bar.

Stiff Leg.

This manacle consists of a band of iron sufficiently large to go round the leg

loosely, about six inches above the knee, and another smaller one, made with hinge and flanges to secure it upon the ankle. These two bands are connected by an upright iron bar, which prevents the knee from bending, and gives the victim a stiff leg, thus preventing any chance of escape from his guard, who works near him through the day, takes him home at night, secures him in the stocks till morning, and then takes him out to his work, and watches him through the day as before. This discipline is kept up until the slave is sufficiently punished for running away, learns to give his best licks of work, to be content with his miserable condition, and also to know that he can be kept on the plantation, whether he is willing to remain or not.

The Coupling Chain.

This is a strong chain, about five feet in length, secured to an ankle-band at each end, and is mostly used to couple two slaves together, when teaching them to gather large weights of cotton. The slaves who have not been raised in the cotton field find it an almost insupportable confinement to keep grabbing at the cotton from day-break till dark. Consequently, they lose time during the day, and then run away when they find night approaching, and the cotton scales close upon them, for they know that "cotton or nigger's hide" will be the order for them.

Buck's Horns.

Recaptured fugitives are sometimes compelled to wear a large pair of buck's horns, attached to an iron neck collar. The collar is large and heavy, with a hinge and flanges for riveting, like the iron bands described above. Two spikes ascend upwards from each side of the collar, and upon these the horns, having holes drilled in them, are secured, the prongs of the horns facing towards the front, as worn by the old buck himself.

Capt. C., a neighbor of mine, once had his rifle leveled on a recaptured fugitive belonging to Col. B. The slave was ditching at the back of the plantation, and the Captain seeing a large pair of buck horns tossing about, as the negro stooped to dig and raised himself up to cast the dirt from

his spade, supposed, judging from the size of the horns, that it was a fine old buck, feeding and tossing up his head to shake off the swarms of musketoos, until, on closer examination, he ascertained that his supposed buck had a negro's head and face between the horns.

Iron horns about fifteen inches in length are sometimes inserted upon the collar in place of buck's horns.

Iron Neck-Collar.

This is a simple collar, without the horns, and generally has the initials of the owner's name stamped into the iron. Sometimes the collar is made of a round iron bar, with a hinge and flanges to hold a rivet; in other cases, it is merely a flat bar of iron bent around the victim's neck at the blacksmith's shop. I was once amused when listening, unobserved, to a fugitive explaining to his fellow slaves the mode in which he rid himself of one of these last mentioned collars. With the assistance of his friends, he procured two log chains, one of which was hooked into the collar on one side, the other end of the chain being fastened to a sapling; the other chain was similarly attached to the collar on the other side of the neck, and its farther end fastened to the end of a strong pole; then with this pole as a lever, and using a small tree for a fulcrum, they were able to exert force enough to gradually draw open the ends of the unriveted collar, and set the man at liberty.

The slaves who wear these manacles wrap old rags around them to prevent them from galling their flesh. Where every owner is the lord of his own slave-
dom, the treatment of slaves, their discipline, punishment, kind of manacles used, etc., vary, as a matter of course.

No laborers, of any race, color or nation, will work without a stimulant. Some value to be received, some object of desire looming up in the distance, stimulates the hopes and energies of every individual among the toiling millions of freemen. But the poor slave cannot be urged on by the freeman's stimulant; the whip and the manacles, which are the wages of slavery, the coins that pass current in slavery, must move him. If slavery is

divine, then these stimulants are divine also, even to the fugitive slave-catcher and his dogs. If a slave, like a ship in a calm, having no motive power, stands still in my field, how can I stimulate that slave to perform his constant straining labor? If, when I apply the stimulating lash, he breaks for the swamps and cane-brakes, how shall I recapture him without putting the well trained dogs upon his trail? Then, how shall I make an example of him to overawe his fellow-slaves, unless I give him a greater punishment than that which is used to stimulate them in their every-day labors? How can I prevent his escape the second time, unless I rivet my chains and manacles upon him, put him to work under guard during the day, and secure him in the stocks at night, until I have completely crushed the manhood out of him, convinced him that I can keep him whether he is willing or not, and until I have made him a willing and obedient thing, a slave, to come cheerfully when I say come, to go cheerfully when I say go, to walk when I say walk, and to trot when I say, "Trot, you black rascal, trot?"

Suppose that the reverend slaveholder, the professing Christian slave breeder, and the reasonable city master and tender-hearted mistress, had no indirect mode of stimulating their slaves, by threats of selling them to the trader, to the southern Legrees, and plantation slave-drivers, would not slavery in their case come to a dead lock at once? Would not the reverend gentleman's slave tell him to clean his own boots and curry his own horse? Could the professing Christian slave breeder "kotch his stock wi' mouldy corn," or would not the tender-hearted mistress's house slave tell her to do her own rubbing and scrubbing, and to sling her own pots, otherwise to pay lawful Christian wages for having this labor performed? I admit that slavery has many degrees of turpitude, from the reverend slaveholder himself down to Mr. ———, on Red River, to whom Uncle Tom's Legree is not worthy of holding a pine knot torch, to lighten up the cruelties committed upon his poor, dirty-looking, badly fed, badly clothed, and over-driven slaves.

If any reverend minister wishes to satisfy himself of these facts, let him turn out as a missionary on the cotton and sugar plantations of Louisiana, and if he is an honest Christian minister, who loves God more than self, fears God more than mortal man, and has drunk deeply of the spirit of the Master, who was rich, but for our sakes became poor, then I am willing to abide the issue of his answer and experience. If he will examine the scarred and welted bodies of the victims, those scars and welts will speak with ten thousand tongues, and speak louder than all the pro-slavery divines in the world united.

When I could no longer drive slaves, I could not hold fellowship with slavery, any more than I could hold fellowship with robbers, prostitutes or murderers, who had neither repented of nor forsaken their wicked doings. Could I hold fellowship with the slave-trader at the communion-table, if he had his coffee-gang manacles swung around him, and was seated on a hogshead of his victim's tears? Could I sit in fellowship with the slave-driver at that table, if he held his bloody lash in his hand, and was calling for "cotton or nigger's hide?" Could I commune with the fugitive slave catcher, if he had his dogs, bloody up to their eyes in human gore, panting at his feet? Or could I sit under the ministry of Rev. Mr. Van Dyke, and see him trail the holy banner of the Cross in the blood of the victims of slavery? Would not my mind carry me back to the cruel scenes which I had witnessed in slavery? And would not the screams and unavailing prayers of the church's victims ring in my ears? Yes, yes; I should see blood on that carefully written sermon, and I should think that the arch enemy of mankind instigated and assisted him to write it. I should see blood on the pulpit and on the communion-table; and as I rushed out, I should see it sprinkled upon the door posts of his church.

When the love of God was shed abroad in my soul, it revolted against the cruelties of slavery upon the plantations, and I dared not join hand in hand with the cruel oppressor any longer; although self and duty had a hard struggle before I was willing to give up my living.

CHAPTER VIII.

Commencement of my own slave-driving.

I HAD several times been offered situations to manage cotton plantations by gentlemen for whom I was working. Capt. T. before mentioned once told me that I should never make much money by working on plantations as a mechanic; but as an overseer, I could make my fortune, because my salary would be better; and if I attended to business properly, my situation would be permanent; my expenses also would be less. To this I replied, that I would never drive slaves, while my own two hands could earn my bread.

But at length, owing to bad health, which unfitted me for labor, having imbibed southern opinions on the slave question generally, accustomed as I was to constant scenes of cruelty, and having learned all the routine of an overseer's duties, I engaged in business on the home plantation of Major D., whose indulgence to his slaves and his aristocratic mode of living forced him to sell one of his plantations, and to employ more crowding overseers afterwards. I had seen a great deal of rascality, and, as I thought, unnecessary abuse practiced towards the slaves, by low, mean overseers. I had constantly heard them order slaves to "shut their mouths and keep their thoughts to themselves, to save their infernal hides," when these slaves had given their overseers good advice respecting the management of business; so I resolved to crowd them at their work when necessary, and keep up strict discipline, but in other things to be as merciful as possible; also to take good advice from a slave, and lastly, to have no favorites among them, but to treat every one according to his merits. I soon found, however, that I had many things to learn of the difficulties of an overseer, which I did not know when I began. First, that it is much more annoying for a person to see a slave flogged when he does not know the cause, than it is for a man who finds business crowding upon him, and flogs, or orders it to be done, under that impulse. Second, that since slaves cannot be discharged, like free laborers, when they become slack,

careless or dissatisfied, the lash, or the fear of it, is always necessary; and the overseer who uses it most promptly, with proper judgment, will use it the least. Third, that the amount of labor which an overseer must require the slaves to perform, makes it utterly impossible for him to be a merciful man. He must harden his heart against listening to complaints of aches and pains, when he suspects no danger to life, and thus he becomes in the end an overbearing and reckless tyrant. However, by making use of the opinions of intelligent slaves, I had more work accomplished, with less labor, than would have been got out of them if I had followed the example of those overseers who cursed the slaves for expressing their opinions, and bade them keep their ideas if they would save their own hides. Of course, the credit of good management went to my own account, and when I gave up the mean business, I had obtained the character of a successful cotton grower.

I once flogged one of the Major's slaves in front of his dwelling-house, when he had company. This annoyed the family very much, and the Major swore that he would not have had the slave flogged there for five hundred dollars. I excused myself by saying that I knew nothing about his visitors, when he instructed me never to flog another slave near his house; it was very annoying to his own family to hear the report of the lash and the cries of the slave. Every thing about that fine mansion moved in beautiful order, because, whenever it was necessary for the servants to be stimulated, they were sent to the overseer with a note, stating the number of lashes he was to give them. The fear of the lash often causes the female slaves to promise the overseer to visit him of nights, if he will not flog them, which arrangement he is very likely to agree to, as they are not under him, and having given him no cause of offense, he is favorably disposed towards them. Thus slavery being an evil, leads to evil continually. I had an opportunity, while on this plantation, of learning the evil effects of slavery on the sons of slaveholders, who fall into evil habits of association with female slaves when mere boys.

It would be useless repetition for me to describe, in narrative form, all the details of my course as an overseer. From first to last, I followed the resolve I made at the commencement, that when my load was heavy, and the road was bad, I must whip up the team which I drove. I had the character, as a general thing, among the slaves, of being tight about business, but just, as far as a slave-driver can be just; kind and attentive to the sick, and always ready to give deserving slaves a chance to make themselves a little money, whenever the opportunity offered. Nevertheless, I now at times shed bitter tears when I remember the wrongs which I have committed upon those helpless, down-crushed creatures, and I have indeed good reason to use this prayer: "Hide me, O my Savior, within the robes of thine own righteousness, on that day when thou shalt take vengeance on oppressors and outragers of the rights of their fellow-creatures."

I was next engaged to manage the plantation of Mr. Y., which was situated on a beautiful lake in Louisiana; and from that time to the end of my overseeing, with the exception of a few months, I managed plantations which were at a distance from the owners' residence of from ten to one hundred miles. There was something less than fifty working slaves on this place, besides the children. I found over twenty of them sick with fevers and agues, this being their first summer in the Louisiana swamp. The former overseer, Mr. T., had done some cruel driving, which had, of course, increased the sickness. I ordered the black driver to give two hours to the slaves in the middle of the day, and not to crowd them until their health had improved somewhat. I then put some of the slaves to repair and make bunks in the cabins, where the inmates were sleeping on the floor. This done, I removed the sick from a room that Mr. T. had prepared as a kind of hospital, under the overseer's house, which stood on brick pillars some six feet above ground. I soon saw that this removal had caused the sick slaves to improve and look more cheerful. Two of the slaves had died a short time before I took charge, and one woman had been buried

with her manacles securely riveted upon her, because Mr. T. did not like the idea of having a dead slave taken to the blacksmith's shop to have the rivets cut loose. Saves, like other ignorant people, are superstitious, and some of those on this plantation were afraid to come to my house of nights, because they said they could hear that woman dragging her chain up and down the steps to my door. When Mr. Y. found that I had cured up the sick without being obliged to seek for medical aid, and without losing a single hand, he promised to give me a fine suit of clothes at Christmas for my attention to his sick slaves. But that was a new plantation, and as I was not supposed to crowd sufficiently to get the work done which a new place requires, Mr. Y. sent me to another of his plantations, already opened, and where he had a crowding black driver. This driver had been trained under Mr. G., who was a perfect Le-gree, and had drowned one slave just before he died, which was a few months before I took the place. The scars and welts left upon those poor slaves will keep him in remembrance, whenever they pass their hands over those knots and welts. That place was soon afterwards sold, and Mr. Y. took this savage driver to drive his carriage. One day, his mistress ordered the other slaves to stretch him out and give him a severe flogging; but the old driver, who used to take one side and Mr. G. the other, when they flogged a slave, coming down upon their victim in the same way that two threshers with their flails come down upon the grain on the barn floor, could not bear the idea of being flogged himself, and committed suicide by jumping into the lake in front of his master's house. Mr. Y. and his family were strict Episcopalians, and on their home plantation read the church prayers to their slaves on the Sabbath, when they had finished all the fag ends of the plantation business, such as hunting up, marking, branding, salting and counting the stock, grinding and handling their hoes and axes, plowmen trimming their mules and repairing their plows and harnesses, and washing and mending their clothes; all of which are probably considered as works of necessity and mercy;

necessity, because it saves time, which would be lost by doing jobs on week-days; mercy to the slaves, who would otherwise have their washing to do when they come home of nights, tired and weary from the labors of the field.

I now engaged to manage a plantation having sixty or seventy slaves, belonging to Capt. T. I went out to commence on the first of January, which is the time that overseers generally close and commence their engagements, because the past year's crop is now saved, and preparations for the coming crop begin. When the black driver returned from his work at night, he came to my house to receive his orders. I told him to continue on at his present work, until I could look around the place, and form my own plans for business. About ten o'clock that night, I heard wagons driving by my house, and called to the drivers to know what they were doing so late. They answered, "Jus' finishin' us day task, sah." The next morning I heard them pass my house again, a little before day-break. I looked out and saw an old slave holding my horse ready saddled, when I mounted, and cantered to where I was told the slaves were at work. It was a cold morning, the wind coming across the Mississippi river from the north, and I was shivering with cold, although wrapped up with a blanket overcoat. Although it was a mile from the cabins, I found the slaves all at work. The black driver stood behind his human team, whip in hand, as large as Pompey. A little girl was making up a fire among some old cotton baskets, which were apparently filled with old rags. I asked her what she had got in those baskets? She answered, "Childer, sah, childer." I then told the black driver not to bring the children out in the cold any more, while I remained on the plantation; that I would find work for the nursing women nearer their cabins, so that they could go to a fire and nurse their children at the proper time. The driver answered, "O Lor, Massa Obersee, ole massa not goin' to stan' dat; he got no time to fool wid dem suckler; he say dat how da suckler bring out he childer, cole or hot. Dat is ole massa rule, you see, sah. One obersee say dat afore you, massa; den ole

massa say dat how he massa on dat plantation." I then concluded that Capt. T. might murder his own children, having found that among so many female slaves he raised but few of their children. I saw two boys coupled together with the coupling chain, to prevent their running away, and the little girl making fire among the baskets, and found from inquiry that there were only a few small ones at the cabins. I then returned, ate my breakfast, and left the plantation. This was one of those slave-owners who are too mean to study their own interest; and I understood that the old Captain subjected all his young female slaves to the abuse, for the gratification of his own vile passions.

CHAPTER IX.

Further Experience in Driving.

I AFTERWARDS engaged to manage a new swamp plantation belonging to Mr. A., where I improved as a driver. Up to this time I had managed old broken-in slaves, who gave so little trouble that my energies were not fairly aroused. But a large number of Mr. A.'s slaves had been lately purchased from the trader, who had brought them from the Border States, where they had left better homes, and been torn from all whom they loved on earth. I used to reflect on these things when I heard them sighing and groaning, and saw them moping about with a melancholy look. But this was none of my business; I had my work before me, and those slaves were bought and sent here to do it. I had not sold them or torn them from their families; and if I had done so, it would only have been doing what the minister said was Gospel, and therefore all right. The Rev. Mr. E., a Methodist minister living in that neighborhood, who had already obtained permission to preach to the slaves on an adjoining plantation owned by Mr. P., asked me to give him permission to preach to the slaves under my charge. This request I refused, because, in the first place, my opinions at that time were such as to make me doubt the truth of Christianity;

and in the second place, Mr. G., a neighbor of mine, who was considered a very correct and reliable man, had related to me that he was fishing at the bayou one Sunday morning, when, hearing a noise among the dead cane, he stepped up the bank to ascertain who was there, and saw the Rev. Mr. E. come out of the cane, mount his horse, and ride towards Mr. P.'s plantation. As the dead cane in the brake still continued breaking and cracking, he waited a little longer, when out stepped one of Mr. P.'s good-looking female slaves, from the place whence he had seen the minister come. The old man remarked that he would not have mentioned the circumstance if it had been a young man, but when a married man, and a minister of the Methodist church, runs after the wenches, he must speak out. The reverend Mr. E. did not, however, give up his purpose, but applied to Mr. A., my employer, who told him that he left the management of his business entirely to his overseer. Mr. A., however, wrote to me, that if I thought it would make his slaves better to manage, I might let the Rev. Mr. E. preach to them sometimes. I wrote him an answer, charging the reverend gentleman with being more anxious after the female slaves than he was to teach them to behave themselves and serve their master properly, and gave him the name of old Mr. G. for proof.

The old negroes who had been raised on the coarse fare of the plantations, and had been accustomed to cruel driving, warned me of the threats made against me by the recently purchased slaves. This did not surprise or alarm me, because I always carried a large bowie-knife, and when I anticipated having to flog any of the new slaves, I carried my Allen revolver, with the first barrel loaded with ten or twelve duck-shot; and no slave durst come near my house at night, until he gave his own name in a loud voice, and had received my answer. I ordered one of these new slaves, who was a powerful man, to shell off his clothes and come down, upon which he gave me some insulting language—insulting for a slave to give a white man in that country. I then doubled the lash of my whip in my hand, and made a blow at his head

with the lead-loaded butt. The ground being wet, I slipped and fell toward the slave, who caught me, and sent me to the ground with a force that cut my head, and scattered the blood some distance. Two women, who were near by, attacked the slave with their hoes; otherwise, I presume, my slave-driving would then have been finished. The slave then ran away, and I was led to my house bleeding profusely. I was confined for a few days only, and when I was sufficiently recovered to revenge my sore head upon him, he was recaptured and brought back, when, of course, he was cruelly flogged.

But I had another powerful Kentucky slave, whose manhood had never been properly crushed out of him. He swore to the other slaves that he would as soon die as not, and he was ready, whenever the overseer told him to shell off and come down. This negro had been torn from his wife and family, which made him surly and desperate; otherwise he was an intelligent and valuable slave. In less than a year after that time, I had him foreman over my axe-men, and married to another wife. The narrow chance of my life I had run a short time before, caused me to use more caution than I had formerly done; so when I undertook to make Kentuck a willing and obedient *thing*, a good working slave, ready to trot when he was bidden, I kept my distance, and ordered him to shell off his clothes and come down. This he refused to do, and I ordered two powerful slaves to knock him down with their hoes. He then raised his hoe, and told them to come on. Seeing the insubordinate attitude of this powerful negro, I resolved to use my pistol, which I drew in a moment, and ordered the two slaves to go to their work, saying that I would manage him alone. Standing about ten steps from him, I again ordered him to come down, or I would send him to — in one minute. He then sprang towards me with his upraised hoe, but slightly stumbled; this gave me an opportunity to put my load of duck-shot into his thighs, when he reeled, and was seized by several slaves. I took him to the cabins and ironed him, and the doctor took out the shot. Of course, he was cruelly flogged, and per-

fectly crushed, before he was let out of irons. But he had scarcely got well from his repeated floggings, when his master, who lived forty miles from the plantation, came up to visit it, and see how business was going on. He gave poor Kentuck another cruel flogging. Mr. A., like most other men not accustomed to flogging slaves, became more and more enraged the longer he flogged him, until I had to beg for the slave to save his life. But when I did so, Mr. A. told me that he would flog his slaves to suit himself, and teach them better than to talk their large talk, and resist his overseers.

Although I had driven these slaves to perform every lick of work which I supposed they were capable of performing, my employer was not satisfied, but wanted me to clear and take into cultivation fifty acres more than I had made preparation for. He wrote to me that it must come in, and that he could not meet his notes due to the slave-trader, unless I made him a large crop. I answered that I had prepared to take in every acre that I could clear up by planting time, and if he was determined to put more land into cultivation, he must send some one to take my place, as it was impossible for me to do more than I was doing. This letter brought him up from his plantation, to judge for himself. He rode half way on the first day, and had traveled twenty miles on the morning of his arrival, and was sufficiently fatigued to lie down and take a nap before he rode out to the clearing. My black driver was a noble fellow, and had better judgment about plantation business than either his master or overseer; so I rode out to the clearing, and gave him a few hints which enabled him to take a little advantage of his master. My employer having rested and taken his dinner, we rode out to the clearing, where the slaves were rolling and burning log-heaps. The ox-driver, who was turning and bedding the large logs, was loudly cracking his whip, and had his oxen on the trot. The black driver stood on a log heap, and was giving orders in the following style: "Four handspikes to that log; down with them; roll on the log; come, up with the log at once, you lazy rascals; the last stick

there; straighten yourself up, sah; step quick, and no stumbling; bed your log right where I'm standing; all right; two sticks to that log, Jim; a stick and a tailer to that small log, Sam; Bob, pick up that chunk; come on with your fire, children; pile on chips, you little rascals; trot, won't you trot?" and then, cracking his whip among the children, "Come on, you women gang; trot, I say, trot, and toss off this log heap, or I'll come among you like shot out of a shovel." While the driver hurries on the women gang, the gang of men rollers are off to another pile of logs, prying and chunking them up closer than the ox driver bedded them; some slaves are chopping the logs in ten-foot lengths ahead of the ox team; others are splitting such as can be split into fence rails, and every thing moves briskly. Mr. A. has been sitting on his horse with his arms akimbo, seemingly in a deep study, as he watches his over-driven slaves work. After some time, he asked me how late I worked at nights. I answered that I rolled logs until sundown, and then all hands, choppers and rail-splitters included, commenced to mend up the burning log heaps, the weakly women and largest children mended the chunk heaps, and burnt up the trash, and the smallest children went home; that it would be after eight o'clock before we had finished, and in the morning they commenced again to mend up the log heaps, and to double up such as were well nigh burnt out, an hour before day. He then told me to slack off a little, and never mind taking in the other fifty acres, but have that, and more if possible, ready for next years' crop; that those slaves would be stiffened up like old stage-horses before his place was opened, if they worked in that manner. I answered that if he could hear them grunt and groan mornings, before they got warmed up, he would think they were badly enough stiffened already. I always went in for giving the slaves sufficient to eat, and when Mr. A. engaged me, he asked my opinion about feeding slaves. I answered that my opinion was for feeding a team well, and then, when my whip cracked among them, they were able to answer to it. So he permitted me to feed well, and my standing order

was to whip the cook, if she did not send them sufficient bread and meat. One of my neighbors complained of this, and said it made the neighbors' slaves dissatisfied with their allowance.

Mr. A.'s father lived a few miles from the city of Baltimore, and as he said that his slaves were an expense to him there, his son wrote on to him that he would give him a hundred dollars per annum for them, and feed, clothe, and pay their doctor's bill himself. The old gentleman sent on two of them, which I think were Mr. A.'s share of a lot divided among the children. One of these slaves and a former body servant of Mr. A. had to be chained together with a coupling chain, to bring them to the constant grabbing at the cotton. They were afraid of the whip, and when weighing-time approached, would run away, and though soon recaptured, would do the same again. At length the coupling chain was used, and two sharp old slaves were set to gathering cotton in the adjoining rows on either side of them, with orders to watch them, and teach them how to take all the cotton from a boll at a single snatch; to remind them that night and the cotton-scales, and the driver's whip were approaching; and to call on the black driver if they neglected their constant grabbing at the cotton.

CHAPTER X.

Slaveholding Piety—A Change.

WHEN I quit Mr. A., I engaged to oversee for Mr. J. on his Mississippi plantation. He owned also a plantation in the Louisiana swamp, which was managed by Mr. L., one of the hardest drivers in the country. He found it difficult to manage the ditching required on a swamp plantation, having been accustomed to an upland place; he therefore proposed to exchange with me for mine. We made the exchange, but I had been long enough on the upland place to learn that Mr. J., who had been a class-leader and was now

a steward in the Methodist church, had a large family of mulatto children by one of his intelligent good-looking female slaves, although he had a wife and family of white children. On the second plantation, also, I found that he had one or two favorites, and his son, who came out to this place during the short time that I remained there, I have reason to believe, went after the same two female slaves. I spoke to him of the adulterous practices of his father, which he acknowledged, and remarked that he found it the same wherever he went among his father's *religious* friends, and swore that he always made it a point to take advantage of *them* in particular, if the objects of their fancy were good-looking.

The slaves of this professing Christian had no religion among them, nor any religious meetings, to my knowledge. They were poor, ashy-looking things, and I saw that the ditchers staggered when they cast a large spadeful of dirt out of the ditch. When I came to rolling logs, I could not put enough of them around a log to take it up and walk off with it—such a log as four sticks, or eight slaves, of Mr. A., would pick up and step off with briskly. These slaves had been accustomed to receive a peck of meal, and three and a half pounds of pork per week, which they had to cook for themselves when their day's work was finished. This I found was an unprofitable business, for the slaves would often mix up their corn meal, put their dough in the ashes, on a spider or an old hoe, and then lie down and go to sleep; of course, their bread was either burned or not half baked, when they had to jump up and take it with them, as they hastened to their morning's work. I found also that their pork would be used up before the week was more than two-thirds gone, and then they were obliged to live on corn bread and cold water till their rations were given out again on Sunday morning.

I now took a trusty old female slave from the field, ordered those who had any cooking utensils to carry them to her cabin, then gave her the mill key, and told her to give those slaves as much well baked corn bread as they could eat; I also weighed out their pork, and gave it to

her to put it in soak every evening. We had no vegetables, but I ordered the cook to give them plenty of lye hominy. It was but a short time before I could see an improvement in the appearance of my team, which consisted of about fifty slaves, besides their children.

I had done a large amount of ditching, fencing, log-rolling, and I might add whipping, and was nearly ready to plant corn, when I received an order to plant the whole place with cotton, and plant the corn in every fourth cotton middle. This plan is sometimes adopted when there is not sufficient land opened for the slaves to cultivate. But I had a full quantity of land, and indeed too much for those weak staggering slaves to cultivate. When the proper proportion of a place is given to corn, that crop is half cultivated before cotton-hoeing commences. But in planting the two together, the whole crop comes on at once, and the corn is in the way of plowing every fourth middle, consequently it requires more hoeing to cultivate the crop. Then in gathering a corn-crop in the fall, the wagons can be driven up to the heaps, which are quickly loaded; but when corn and cotton are intermixed, the slaves have to carry the corn in baskets to the turn-row running through the field.

I sent an answer back by letter, that I could not cultivate such a crop with those weak slaves, two or three of whom were dropsical, from taking calomel and being exposed afterwards. The reply which I received from that slave-driving professing Christian was to obey orders, and all would be right. I returned an answer that I would leave the place on a certain day, giving Mr. J. sufficient time to supply my place. I then resolved never to drive slaves for another professing Christian. An overseer in Louisiana cannot recover his salary when he quits before his year expires, unless he can show good cause for quitting, and I had no sufficient cause according to law; so I lost my salary for that portion of the year which I spent on the swamp plantation. I, however, sued my employer and recovered my wages for the time I was on the upland place. The merciful man is merciful to his beast; but what mercy

can be expected from a professedly Christian slave owner or driver? Mr. J. lost so many slaves by his reckless driving on his swamp plantation, that he was obliged to give it up and sell out. I heard of his death a short time before I left the South, and read his obituary notice in the New-Orleans *Christian Advocate*, which stated that a good man had gone to his reward, and had left an example worthy of being imitated by the youth of his neighborhood. I then made inquiry to ascertain whether he had liberated his slave children, and found that he had not, but had left them, according to the reading of the bill of sale, slaves for life, and their issue forever, to their half brother and sisters; a condition of things which must suit the church of which he was a member, otherwise the writer of that obituary notice could not have recommended the youth of his church to follow such an example.

I next engaged to manage a plantation for Mr. N. This was not such a situation as I desired, but as I wanted business for the remainder of the year, I concluded to engage. The overseer who had just left was discharged for flogging a slave to death. The owner told me this was the most valuable young slave that he owned, and that he had thought of putting the law in force against Mr. C., the murderer, but that would not recover his property, and he therefore thought best to let it pass. The slaves told me that Mr. C. chained his victim to a tree, which they pointed out to me in the yard. He flogged him until he was tired, when he returned to his house, took a drink of whiskey, rested himself, and then came back to finish his dreadful work.

The cause which led to this murder was want of judgment on the part of both the owner and overseer. This slave was one of the best cotton pickers in the country, and when the cotton and weather were good, it was easy for him to gather three hundred and fifty pounds a day. But I saw from the weights of cotton on the cotton book, that he had often fallen a hundred pounds below that quantity. The owner, who received, in the overseer's weekly report, an account of the average weight each slave was gath-

ering, wrote back that his slaves must all be flogged until they came up to something like their former average gathering, and especially Oz, who sometimes fell one hundred pounds below his best gathering. The cause of the low weights gathered by the slaves at this time was the scarcity of cotton in the field. When there is plenty of cotton open, which has had no rain upon it, to beat the decayed leaf that surrounds the boll into the cotton, or to entangle the cotton among the branches, then, if the weather is good, the slaves gather their best weights. The old experienced manager, if he is not a fool, knows before he goes to weigh the days' gathering, whether the slaves will have higher or lower weights than usual; and when, with good cotton and a moist, calm day, he finds they have generally raised their weights, he only flogs those who have not come up in proportion to the whole gang. When the cotton is scarce, or the gathering is made more difficult by a storm, or if the day is windy or cold, the overseer looks for smaller weights, and flogs only those who have fallen off the most. In the case I am relating, there was but little cotton in the field, owing to the small crop raised that year, which caused the slaves to keep up more closely with the cotton as it opened, than they would have done had there been a good crop. Thus slavery, the one man power in our Republic, places our brother man and sister woman under the dominion of stupid tyrants, who do not understand the business they follow, although they boast of bringing the brain and intelligence of the master race to control the slave race, and make their sinew and muscle useful to the world at large. It is my opinion, however, that Oz would have supported himself, where his master and overseer would both have perished, had all of them been left to their own resources of brain and muscle.

I made two crops on Mr. N.'s plantation, not counting the one which I finished gathering this season; the last of them the largest ever made in that parish. In doing this, I committed many cruelties; nevertheless, these poor over-driven slaves, two years afterwards, were glad to see me return and take charge of them again.

Some time after my return to this plantation, and when there was a prospect of a large cotton crop, I overheard two slaves making some remarks about it. "Aunt Viney," said a boy of about sixteen years of age, "how is it dat when Massa John come here, we is got so much cotton, cotton on da ground, cotton on da turn-row, and we got no time to pick it up? Den we got so much peas, punkins and potatoes dat we donna know which to eat fust."

Viney answered, "Dat how Massa John work head work, and make nigger travil when it is da right to travil. Den when he once got ahead ob da grass, you see how he is got no more trouble. Dis is how we work light arter dat, an' we loose up da dirt more times about da cotton. But I tell you, boy, dat nigger is got to work for Massa John till he am safe from grass, an' he crop is pitched; den he lay in da shade, an' read he paper."

"Dat am fact, aunt Viney, cause one time when you look about you, dar is he certain sure; den again you want to see him, you is got to go to he house fust; den Massa John is goin' to whip you in a minute, if he got you good, but if he not got you good, he let you go. Dat toder obersee not got dat much sense. 'Cause when he goin' to whip you certain sure, den you not know when he is goin' to whip you, an' you spect it all da time. But, aunt Viney, I spect it all da time when we break up da ground, 'cause we not custom to break up deep like we do dis time."

"No, you spare you team, an' make hoe nigger kill da grass. Ah! boy, I help Massa John to do dat, 'cause I is talkin' ole nigger, an' Massa John listen to me, chile. Some time he say dat how I is ole fool, but some time he say, *good* ole woman, I give you a bowl of sugar for dat idee. An' dat is da cause why we is now got so much cotton, vegetables an' corn."

"But, aunt Viney, when we break up deep afore, our team come down poor like dogs; but dis time da mule fat like butter."

"Dat am trufe, chile; an I s'pose you member how you grumble 'bout Massa John make you feed your mule; when I tell you to shut you mouf, cause Massa

John is right; he is goin' to kill da grass by break up da groun' good, and not goin' to kill hoe nigger."

"Dat is da trufe; we grumble 'cause we not know why da mule got so much 'tention afore. We put corn in da trough and fodder in da rack, an' da mule help his sef to much as he please; but Massa John make us clean da trough good, an den we give da mule a little an' a little all da time. Den at night he come again wid he light, an' he bother us all da time, all da blessed time, aunt Viney. Den he make us water da mule afore we goin' to bed, 'cause he say dat how da mule want water when he done eat he supper; den he lay down, an' he rest good."

"Go an' tend to your work, boy; 'cause when you not spect da overseer, den he is right arter you, I tell you. Toder overseer goin' send you, an' when you foolin' you time away, den he whip you, an' trufe da nigger is whipt, but he loss time is not come back. Massa John is goin' send you too, but he is right arter you, I tell you, boy, an' he not long afore he comin' now."

I do not mean to screen myself because contact with slavery makes men cruel and overbearing; but unless a slave resisted me, I generally listened to him in a cool manner before I flogged him, and if he could show any good reason why he should not be flogged, he escaped the punishment. Of course, I never had a just cause when I flogged a slave—only such cause as is considered just among thieves and robbers of other men's labor. I once had a powerful mulatto slave, belonging to Mr. J. before mentioned, laid down to be flogged for stealing a shoat. Wash begged me to hear him speak for himself. I granted his request, but told him that he was a bad fellow, and had once stabbed his overseer, as I understood. He acknowledged the fact, but said that if some man was to be found with my wife, I should want to kill him too. He went on to say, "True, sir, I did kill master's hog, but I am a large man, and require more food than others require. When you give me tasks of ditching, or making fence-rails, you give me the largest task, but you don't give

me any more meat than you give the others" "Well, sir," I asked, "how much meat per week will satisfy you?" "Well, you know, Master John, that when you task other slaves to cut and split one hundred, a hundred and ten, fifteen, twenty, or twenty-five rails, you task me a hundred and thirty; when you task us at cleaning out ditches a spit deeper, you give some thirty-five, some forty yards, but you task me at forty-five; and if you will give me five pounds of meat per week, I will kill no more hogs." I told him to rise and go about his business, and I would give him five pounds of meat every Sunday morning. I had no occasion to fear that Wash would stab me after that; and it has astonished me, in some of my reflecting moments, to study the forgiving disposition which is characteristic of the slaves.

CHAPTER XI.

History of a Preacher's Daughter.

My cook on this plantation was a splendid woman, and an honest, trustworthy slave. She was less than forty years of age, a bright mulatto of medium size, with a mild, intelligent countenance; her hair was long, with just sufficient kinks to add to its beauty, and no lady need covet a more perfect figure. But the cruel and licentious abominations of slavery had destroyed her happiness, from the day that she began to bloom into womanhood, and will continue to destroy it until the grave shall hide her from the oppressor, and her beautiful but welted and scarred body shall mix and moulder with its mother earth.

I once questioned her about her parentage and native State, when she informed me that she was born in Virginia; her mother being a mulatto slave, and her father a white man, who was a local preacher in the Methodist church. Her mother was sold when she was quite young, and shortly after she herself was sold, and taken to Fort Smith, Arkansas.

She could not positively say that her mother was sold because her mistress was jealous of her, but she thought that was the cause. Her new master made her the victim of his lust when she was very young, and threatened to sell her off to a cotton plantation, if she let her mistress know what he was doing. Her mistress was a kind lady, and was very good to her generally; she taught her to sew, and dressed her in good style. She was too young then to understand fully the great wrong she was committing against her kind mistress; but it would have made no difference if she had understood it, for her master was a stern man, and she would not have dared to resist. She was also very much afraid of being sold to a plantation, to be flogged by the bad overseers. Her mistress had another house slave with whom her master was intimate, but he loved her the most, which so roused the jealousy of her fellow slave, that, out of revenge to her rival, she informed their mistress. This caused the lady to watch her husband and the young slave, until at length she caught them. This produced a quarrel between her master and mistress, and the latter did nothing but weep for a long time afterwards. At length, her master being absent from home, her mistress took advantage of the opportunity, and ordered her fellow-slave to strip her, and tie her hands and feet. Her mistress then whipped her until she became exhausted, when she ordered the other to continue flogging her, while she went to get some fire to burn her with.

But I cannot give the revolting details of this cruel punishment. I have frequently heard of jealous mistresses burning their slaves in a cruel manner, but propriety forbids me to describe the mode, for the same reasons that I cannot give the vile slang used by slave-drivers towards their female slaves. The lady of a very respectable planter said in my hearing, that the best mode of bringing the truth out of slaves that she had ever tried, was to drop hot sealing-wax upon some tender portion of the body, drop after drop, until their lies were finished, and then the truth would follow; and there is no doubt, from the character of her husband, and his known attachment to his

female slaves, that she had occasion to improve her art in obtaining disclosures of this kind. Mr. G. F. Train, in the "Facts" he has published concerning slavery, says that ladies put out the eyes of their female slaves by jobbing them with knitting-needles, roasted them in ovens, etc. This was in the West India Islands, and not in America, says the author of the "Facts." But slavery is the same brutal, licentious abomination now that it was then; jealousy is the same green-eyed monster now as then; and human nature is the same fallen, depraved human nature here that it was in the West India Islands. Every plantation has its own private graveyard, and is walled around with its gag-laws, here as it was there; and if there is any slight change, it consists in acting with more caution and privacy than slaveholders formerly thought necessary. Let those acquainted with the manner in which jealousy converts almost into demons some of the softer sex, when their rival is an equal and independent of them, consider how it must be when the mistress, a high southern lady, ascertains that her slave, a low degraded thing, a chattel to be bought and sold like a brute, has marred her happiness, destroyed her domestic peace, turned her love into hatred, and left her no bosom whereon she may lay her head, and weep over the trouble which has sunk so deeply into her soul! At first, of course, it causes her heart to faint within her; then it arouses every passion and devilish feeling to be found in depraved human nature, until boiling with rage and a determination to avenge herself, she springs like a tiger upon her victim; and the fact that her rival is a helpless, unprotected thing, only adds fuel to her demoniacal fury, as the poor creature offers her unavailing prayer: "O, my dear mistress! Pray have mercy this time! Pray, my mistress, have mercy, mercy, mercy! My master threatened to send me off to the plantation, under the bad overseer, that he did, my mistress, or I would never have done what I have! O, my dear mistress, do show mercy to this poor creature, that is placed between two whips, the whip if I do, and the whip if I don't! What shall I do, oh! what on

earth shall I do? O, my mistress, my mistress, mercy, mercy, mercy!"

This poor slave girl, as soon as her mistress had gone to bring the fire, was so frightened at the thought of being burned, that she broke loose, and in her frenzy ran to the kitchen for a knife to cut her throat. She seized a dull table knife, and did her utmost to sever her windpipe and the jugular vein, but the instrument being dull, she did not have time to accomplish her purpose, before her fellow-slave caught her and snatched the knife away. A permanent large scar was left upon her throat. Soon after the wound healed up, she was sold to a single gentleman, a merchant living on the Arkansas river. He told her he had purchased her for his wife, on account of her beauty; and if she would behave herself, he would give her her freedom when he married. She lived a long time with him, as his wife and housekeeper, hoping that her master would at length marry, so that she might be free, and go in search of her poor mother. In giving me this account, she shed tears when she mentioned her mother. But amidst her hopes of obtaining freedom for herself, and then working to purchase her mother, she was shocked to learn that her unfeeling master had traded her off for dry goods! Her new master told her to get herself ready to go down to Mississippi; that he had purchased her for his wife, and should make her the mistress of a large plantation which he owned. While going down the Mississippi, he ordered her to come into his state room of nights. But when she arrived at the end of her journey, she found that her wealthy planter was only a clerk of Messrs. N. & D., her real owners, to whom he then turned her over. She was taken to Mr. N.'s residence, where she was kept for a house servant. Here she had a little peace, as no one offered to take a wrong advantage of her. But she had now lost all her hopes of freedom and of freeing her poor mother, if she could have found her.

In the course of time, she was sold to her present master, who purchased her for a seamstress, and for his wife, or rather for one of his many wives. After some years, he opened a new cotton plan-

tation in the Louisiana swamp, and sent her there to keep house for his overseer, and to make clothing for his slaves. Her master told the overseer, in her presence, that he wanted to keep up his stock of slaves of the pure African blood without any mixture, as it paid well to raise slaves at present prices; he therefore expected him to keep out of the slaves' quarters of nights; but he could use his own pleasure with respect to his mulatto housekeeper. She was the best-looking woman on the plantation, consequently had to submit to all the overseers that managed the place; and if ordered to do so, she must bring them some other one to suit their fancy, from the cabins or from the neighboring plantations. The overseers generally allow their cooks to visit occasionally, unless jealousy prevents their doing so. One of the overseers having permitted this woman to visit a neighboring plantation, upon which such visits were not forbidden, she became acquainted with an old Baptist slave, who preached Jesus to her in an attractive manner. "O chile," said the old slave, "if you only knew my bressed Jesus, you love him forever. Oh! dat sweet Jesus, dat dear Jesus, he name make dis ole slave jump wid joy in all her trouble. Quit your badness, chile, and den seek dat sweet Jesus, an' you never sorry; no, no, when all da trouble come upon you, chile, den my bressed Jesus is wid you, an' he never leave you, chile, no, never" I am well acquainted with that old Baptist slave, and she is always happy in her religious experience. Her exhortations were not lost upon the housekeeper, who now determined to submit to a life of prostitution with the overseers no longer. This determination brought the most revengeful persecution upon her, and she was flogged and abused till she concluded to run away, and beg protection of her master. His residence was some forty miles distant, and she had to cross the Mississippi river. She selected a dark, rainy night, that she might the more easily dodge any one who should meet or overtake her. She left the plantation about ten o'clock, when all was quiet, and after traveling two miles, had to cross a wide stream, called in Louisiana a bayou. The

ferry-boat was lying on the opposite side of the stream, but the ferryman had a rope stretched across for the convenience of pulling his boat over, in place of oars. She took advantage of the rope, and dragging herself along by it, hand over hand, at length succeeded in getting across. Her escape from the alligators, while crossing the stream, was a wonderful preservation, as most of the bayous are well stocked with these dangerous animals, which I have seen pull a full-grown hog under; and this one in particular was a noted resort for them, being situated at the foot of a shallow lake, a large portion of which was covered with reeds. She came out on the opposite side of the bayou wet and cold, and made her way through a lonely swamp which is inhabited with bears, wolves, catamounts, and deadly snakes. She made the settlement on the other side just as day broke, and then hunted for a hollow gum log, in which to conceal herself during the day. She found one where she supposed she would be safe till night, when she hoped to get some slave to cross her over the Mississippi river, having a little money with her to pay for crossing. Before night, however, the dogs found her, and she was obliged to creep out of her hiding place, and return to the hateful overseer and the home of her prostitution.

The cold which she caught that night settled in her eyes, and when I last saw her, she was nearly blind. Whenever she complained or excused herself for not having done any thing properly, she was cursed, and told that her own rascality had brought her affliction upon her. However, she was living in the hope that she should one day cross over Jordan and escape from her cruel oppressors, as she had safely crossed over the bayou and escaped from the jaws of the lurking alligators.

CHAPTER XII.

Dreadful Death—a Family Sketch.

I WAS one day sent for in great haste to go over and see my nearest neighbor. I asked the slave that came after me what was the matter with Mr. L? He answered that he was very sick, and old Harriet, his housekeeper, said the house was full of devils come to burn him up on a log heap. When I arrived, my neighbor was gasping for breath, and died shortly afterwards. I questioned the old slave about the house being full of devils, and she told me that the previous Sunday, while the slaves were all about their cabins, they were told that Mr. L. had gone to bed sick, when old Lize prayed that he might never leave his house any more, until he left it feet foremost. This was told to Mr. L. by his fancy girl, when he immediately sent for his black driver, and the plantation carpenter, a slave. He told the driver to give old Lize a severe flogging, then to fasten her feet in the stocks, and keep her there till he ordered her out. He then directed the carpenter to take her measure, and make her coffin in the quickest kind of time. On the following day he called to Harriet, and bid her drive every infernal nigger out of that house. Harriet told him that she was the only nigger in the house, but he swore that she was a liar, and that the house was full of niggers, who were building up a large log heap, and when it was finished, the rascals intended to put him on it, and burn him up. Old Harriet, who, like most other slaves, was superstitious, became frightened and almost ready to drop down; but she had to make a pretense of driving out the niggers, as the old man had his pistols at the head of his bed, and threatened to shoot her, if she did not drive them out in short order. When she found he was growing weak, she sent for me to come over and see him, as she did not know what to do, and was afraid to stop in the house with the wicked old man. Among the last words he spoke, he begged for some one to come and save him from those niggers, and asked if he had no friends in the world to save him from being burned up on that log heap.

Old Lize was let out of the stocks, and the coffin which had been placed by her side to bury her in, was burned up by the slaves, I believe, before the old man left his house feet foremost, according to the imprecation that Lize had uttered in her prayer.

The following sketch from southern life came mostly within my own knowledge; the secret portion of it was told to me by one of the actors in the deception, who was himself a near neighbor of mine, while I lived on this plantation.

I had worked on Mr. R.'s plantation shortly after I first went to the South. He had only a few slaves at this time, but he had a valuable tract of land, which he sold for a high price, and used the money in purchasing slaves. He then settled back in the swamp on Congress land, and, in twenty years from that time, became the owner of above one hundred slaves, besides a large plantation, well improved, on which he had built one of the best dwelling-houses in that section of country. His first wife was dead, and he had married a beautiful young lady; thus he had, in his pretty wife and large plantation, all that even the most sanguine secessionist might desire. But I have noticed that death, in choosing among living men, seems to select those who have just said to their soul, Now rest perfectly satisfied, because I have secured that which I have desired and toiled for.

Mr. R.'s place, like most other freshly opened plantations, had a large graveyard, which hid for the present a number of welted and scarred victims, who had labored hard to clear that heavily timbered land, to fence and ditch it, and get out the timber for his large and commodious buildings. But he had not yet buried all his stiffened up and broken down slaves. Females are liable to become diseased in many ways by the straining labor of opening such places. Mr. H. had one who suffered so much from a prolapsus, that she had to remain a large portion of her time in a horizontal position. Her master, tired with doctoring her and losing her time, at length ordered her to go to work, and if she died, to die and be ———. It was not long before she was

brought home to her cabin worse than before, which so enraged her whisky-stimulated master, that he swore she had done it on purpose. I shall spare my readers the harrowing details of the cruel mutilation she then underwent, and which it is wonderful that she survived for a single day. How long she lived afterwards I do not know, having asked for no particulars at the time I was told of the affair, and having no idea then that I should ever write an account of these horrid cruelties.

Soon afterwards Mr. R. was taken sick, and died after a few days' illness. The young and beautiful widow he had left was now rich, and able to choose a husband to suit herself, in her second marriage. In making her first choice, she was poor, and could not do as she pleased. A few years passed over, and an enterprising northern merchant, who kept a store in that neighborhood, was engaged to be married to her. She had doubtless concluded that he was free from the common vice of that country, from which she had suffered so much during her first husband's life. But some one now revealed to her the fact that he was living with his mulatto housekeeper as his wife. The next time her intended husband made a visit to her house, she insulted him, and told him that his company was no longer desirable.

But this was too good a chance to be lost without a struggle, he therefore refused to leave the house till he had received a full explanation. She then told him what she had heard concerning his conduct at home. He calmly replied that an enemy had done this, and he would prove to her satisfaction that it was false. He then told her that one of his neighbor's mulatto slaves had been visiting his housekeeper constantly, and they were going to be married the next Sunday. He invited her to drive up to his house on Sunday, and question the slaves, see their marriage, and convince herself that he had been scandalized. After gaining her consent to drive up on Sunday as proposed, he excused himself, saying that he had urgent business, and must leave. He then rode up to see my friend, before mentioned, explained to him the whole

affair, and begged him to help him out of his difficulty by permitting his mulatto slave to marry his housekeeper on the following Sunday, and by allowing him to come early, that he might instruct him how to answer any questions that might be asked. This favor was granted, and of course his own female slave durst not do otherwise than obey her master's orders. Sunday came; a splendid carriage drove up with the lady, who had an opportunity of questioning the slaves, saw them married, partook of their wedding dinner, returned home perfectly satisfied, and shortly afterwards sat down at her own wedding dinner with the man who had thus abused her confidence. The beautiful, straight-haired mulatto slave was sold and sent to another country, and my friend's slave lost his wife a few weeks after their marriage.

Slaveholders and overseers, unrestrained by any of the customs of society, become perfectly shameless in their licentious practices. Young females are called up to dance before them in the most indecent and exposed manner; no respect is paid to family connections; mothers, daughters and sisters, all are fish for their nets. But what else can be expected, where men carry the lash and possess uncontrolled power? What on earth is to restrain them, when the female cannot protect her own virtue, and when it makes her more honorable among her female slaves to be a white man's favorite? I might cite many examples from those with whom I became well acquainted. Mr. S. is a wealthy slaveholder, whom I heard declare that it made no difference to him what the relations of the slaves were; mothers, daughters, or sisters, they all came at his call. Mr. A. and Mr. G. were utterly shameless, the latter particularly, in getting up nude dances among his slaves. But I am forbidden to expose all his outrageous doings; slavery will never be fully known in this world; its deeds cannot be written, they cannot be published, they could not be read!

Mr. W. told me that his employer, who was a wealthy planter, had for years kept a handsome mulatto slave for his mistress, and when her two daughters bloomed into womanhood, he lived with them in

the same manner; they were not, however, his own daughters. This slaveholder was a married man, but his wife did not live on the plantation. I knew one slaveholder, the son of a wealthy amalgamator, who owned eight or ten of his half sisters. He followed in the steps of his father, and, I have reason to believe, paid no respect to the relationship between himself and these half-sisters.

CHAPTER XIII.

Struggles with Conscience.

I QUIT my last situation on account of salary, and engaged with Capt. P. for the year 1853. My future was now about to be decided for weal or for woe. Through the example of the company with whom I had been associated for years, drinking had become with me a constant daily habit. When at home and at my business, I never indulged myself with more than a moderate dram, unless I was at leisure and friends called to see me, when it would have been considered unsocial not to sit down and take a few drinks with them. Of course, my neighbor must do the same when I called on him. But it was well for the slaves under my charge, that when whisky had banished cool judgment and confused my brain, I was more than usually good-natured; and it would have been difficult at such a time to rouse my anger sufficiently to make me flog or abuse them. Indeed, they would frequently select such opportunities to procure some favor that I should not have granted, unless I had been excited with whisky.

I had no longing for repeated doses of the poisonous stuff; therefore, to enable me the better to resist the constant urging of friends, I resolved that I would never, amongst any company whatever, take more than a single drink. This resolve preserved me from taking a "drop too much" for a considerable length of time. But upon one occasion an overseer urged me to drink with him, after I had taken my stipulated glass. I apologized for refusing, and explained to him

my reasons; but he continued to press me the more, and at length began to prepare for a fight. He swore that I should either drink with him, or whip him, or be whipped myself. He was a fighting man, and was shot dead in a fray a short time afterwards. I preferred drinking to fighting such a ruffian, and in settling the difficulty which had sprung up, repeated drinks were taken, until whisky ruled as monarch of that slavedriving crowd. None but those who have lived in that section of country bordering on Red river, can form any idea of a drunken crowd of slavedrivers, all of them armed to the teeth with bowie knives and pistols; and should the lower regions be free from any other punishment than that of dwelling to all eternity with those blasphemous, obscene, slang-using, conscience-seared, time-hardened sinners, it would be well worth living an upright, godly life, to escape from such a society as theirs. From this time I generally drank too much, whenever I fell in with a drinking company, until a Baptist lady, with whom I had long been acquainted, shamed me out of it, and I quit drinking altogether. This lady and her family have since quit the South, and have settled in a free State. She told me the causes of their leaving were, first, that they hated slavery, and did not want to live among it any longer; second, she felt satisfied in her own mind that in a few years the slaves would rise and murder them all. Her counsel was the means of saving me, for I had, at times, for several years, been under deep convictions, and could scarcely throw them off without the assistance of the exhilarating dram, to which I generally resorted when conscience or trouble of any kind annoyed me. But this abandoning of my former practice compelled me to shun drinking crowds, which made me unpopular; because when any of the company brought up charges against me, I was not there to defend myself.

That section of country is chiefly a continuation of large plantations, managed, generally, by overseers without families. The settlements are mostly confined to the higher lands, on the lakes, rivers and bayous; and between these settlements

lie extensive low palmetto lands, which are commonly overflowed in the spring of the year. This year I had much less crowding than usual. The plantation being flat and not properly ditched, the July rains, which were unusually heavy, pouring down for ten or twelve days without intermission, scalded the cotton, so that I only made about half the customary crop. Consequently, there was no necessity of overworking during the gathering season, and as Capt. P. intended to remove his slaves from the place when the crop was gathered, there were no improvements to be made, such as building, ditching, fencing or clearing land. During the summer, I suffered from a dangerous attack of fever, and, contrary to my usual custom, was obliged to send for a physician. I continued to get worse until I called in the second, who checked the fever, and I recovered. This near approach to death alarmed me, and I now had no whisky to assist me in overcoming my convictions. When death looked me in the face, I had no hope; all was dark and gloomy; I had no religious friend to give me advice, nor did I know of one Christian among those fifty to sixty slaves. I durst not look for mercy from that Savior whom I had so long rejected, and indeed my fevered brain unfitted me for any preparation for death. I however resolved that if I should be spared, I would trifle with my eternal interests no longer. But when I recovered, I found so many obstacles in the way of carrying out my resolution, that I began to stagger, and think of postponing my purpose to some more convenient season. First, I was in embarrassed circumstances, having broken down a few years previous, and consequently thought I must continue at my overseeing for several years longer; and it appeared to me that it would be not only impossible, but an insult to high heaven, and to that compassionate Savior through whose merits alone my sins could be pardoned, for me to hope for mercy, so long as I followed that unmerciful occupation, and carried that cruel lash. Then I had toiled long at my present business, and had now gained a reputation as a good cropper and a good practical manager of

slave stock, having experience in doctoring men, women and children, and being well posted up on the best mode of treating our swamp fevers.

I had previously leaned towards infidelity, but a candid examination of the proofs of holy writ had driven me from that ground. I now commenced examining the scriptural authority for slavery. I purchased and read Fletcher's *Studies on Slavery*, Dr. Este's *Defense of Slavery*, and Dr. Cartwright's *Letters to the Rev. Dr. Winans*. The latter went to show not only that God was the author of slavery, but that the anatomy of the African proved that God had created him for a slave. I now felt satisfied that God had specially adapted the negroes to a state of servitude, and that he was actually the author of slavery. But I could not feel satisfied, after an examination of the Christian platform, laid down in the *Sermon on the Mount*, and scattered through the four Gospels, also repeated and constantly enforced in the writings of the apostles, that it was right and Christian to drive and flog slaves as my duty to my employer, and to my own reputation as an overseer, compelled me to drive and flog them. I also concluded that it was wrong for the southern church to send missionaries where Christians of other countries could send them, while neglecting the ignorant plantation slaves; that it was inexcusable in professing Christian slaveholders thus to disregard the eternal interests of their slaves; and that if the Bible was true, and God had sent his Son into this world to redeem the human race from eternal death, then it was an outrage for slave-owners to whip religion off their plantations, and thus shut from their souls the light of heaven. When I examined the fruits of Christianity, as they were exhibited within the circle of my own acquaintance, my old doubts of its heavenly origin would return. I believed that Paine, Hobbes, and Voltaire were men possessed of large liberty-loving souls; and might not their views of one God, the Father of all men and things, be more correct, more just and right, than this wicked oppressive Christianity? Did not oppressive kings and pleasure-loving priests concoct this Christian sys-

tem, that they might oppress the world by binding the conscience? I then took a survey of the doings of professing Christians, and compared their conduct with their book. But the book would own no oppressor; and yet, according to my experience, those who professed to be guided by that book were all oppressors of the most outrageous character.

Mr. J. was a member of the Methodist church, asked a blessing at his table, and had daily prayer in his family. In speaking of his zeal, Mr. C., his overseer, told me that he would blow off his surplus religion at their camp meetings much in the same manner as Mississippi high pressure steamers blow off their escape steam. I once attended preaching at a school-house near to Mr. J.'s cotton gin-house. It was during the cotton gathering season, and while the meeting was going on, the day's gathering of cotton was being weighed at the gin-house. The slaves had fallen off in their weights, and Mr. C. applied the stimulating lash freely. The preacher had a strong voice, but Mr. C.'s lash had a stronger, and the cries of the poor flogged slaves were more impressive to me than any thing which the preacher said. That night I saw the overseer, and asked him how he could for shame disturb that meeting by flogging his slaves so severely? He replied that I must be very green, if I supposed that whipping a nigger or two would disturb that meeting; no, no, it reminded them that King Cotton reigned below, and King Jesus above, and that their pockets were being replenished with the useful, while they were seeking the needful from above. Mr. C. was from the free States, and understood matters and things connected with slavery and Christianity; consequently, he ridiculed their religion, as intelligent men generally do. Mr. J. was an obliging neighbor, and might be called one of the better sort of men, so far as white people were concerned. But when it came to the slaves, he was as hot as red pepper.

Mr. E. and most of his family belonged to the Methodist church. He was a hard and cruel slave-owner, and instead of seeking to be replenished with fresh supplies of a heavenly spirit, he was accustomed

to resort very frequently to the brandy bottle, and I presume supplied the lack of the one by copious draughts from the other. His son, who was a chip of the old block in the matter of slave driving, was his father's overseer. On one occasion, when bringing a recaptured fugitive slave home from the parish jail, a distance of over twenty miles, he secured the fugitive's hands with the hand-cuffs, then tied one end of a rope to the victim's body and the other end to the pommel of his Spanish saddle, and ordered him to trot for home, where he would find a fugitive's hell, to balance accounts with the fugitive's heaven, that he had lately been enjoying. The slave became exhausted with trotting to keep up with his young master's horse, and fell to the ground, when this son of a professing Christian family dragged his victim for considerable distance over the rough swamp road. It was late at night when he reached the plantation, so he locked the fugitive to one of the logs of a log cabin, and told him to prepare his hide for a fugitive's flogging early in the morning. But when morning came, and the young tyrant went to settle accounts with his slave, he found that his victim had preferred to meet his Creator uncalled, rather than remain and receive a fugitive's punishment. He consequently lost his morning's frolic over the flogging of his victim, for even a slave-driver sees no fun in flogging a dead nigger, any more than Mr. T. did in knocking the irons off the woman whom he had murdered, after she was dead.

I went one day to hear the Rev. Mr. D, a noted preacher, and elder in the Methodist church, preach one of his big sermons. When he was about to wind up his discourse, he addressed the few slaves who were present in the following manner: "Ignorance will be no excuse for you, slaves, in that day, remember! Ye have sufficient knowledge to judge a wicked professor of religion; indeed, ye generally notice such a one quicker than others do; therefore, God will hold you responsible for the light which he has given you, remember!" Who can wonder that slaves, with the examples they see before them, should have a poor opinion of their master's religion, and also of

the reverend preachers who use the Scriptures as a cloak to cover up iniquity and oppression?

CHAPTER XIV.

Slave-driving Abandoned—and Resumed.

I READ, in a southern church paper, an extract from a letter taken, I think, from the *New-York Observer*, that surprised me considerably. When I take up a political paper, I expect the editor may vary from the truth a little, to bolster up his party, and to crush, if possible, the one to which he is opposed. But when I take up a religious paper, I expect to find the truth told, unless the editor may have been deceived. This extract boasted loudly of the religious privileges which the slaves had in my section of country, and wound up by stating that slaveholders employed resident ministers on their plantations. The parish, or county, in which I lived, was over fifty miles long, and thickly settled, for that region, with large plantations of slaves. I counted up the churches which were in the parish, and found none. I then counted the number of preaching-places, and found five, including the court-house, and I may safely say that not thirty slaves attended any one of these meeting-houses upon an average. I found one widow lady who employed a resident minister, of the *New-York Observer's* church, at the rate of three hundred dollars per annum, to preach to the slaves on two or three large plantations, while she paid her overseers at the rate of one thousand dollars per annum; and they drove these slaves as if the widow had determined to clear the minister's salary, over and above the usual crop. One gin-wright, who was a local Methodist preacher, had just been whipped by the overseer, and run off; and another gin-wright, who was a Baptist minister, was promised eighty dollars per annum for preaching at one of the school-houses, but when pay day came, he received less than thirty dollars. I was told that Mr. N., one of the overseers of the afore-mentioned widow's late

husband, would flog as many as thirty slaves at a single cotton-weighing, and I once saw him flog nearly that number.

Dr. R. was the most strictly religious man in that neighborhood, and gave especial attention to the moral and religious wants of his slaves; but shortly after his death, the most promising of his sons flogged religion off the plantation, and lived openly with one of his female slaves as his wife. A near neighbor of mine at this time was, next to Dr. R., more attentive to the religious privileges of his slaves than any other professor within my knowledge; but his slave-driving and crowding kept his religious fervor so cool, that when sitting up all night, in company with myself, with a dying sinner, who expired the next morning, he never once named to him Jesus as the sinner's hope. He would ask him how he felt, if he was any better, or if he wanted any assistance, but never asked him if he wanted his sins pardoned.

Three Misses S., who were members of good standing in the Baptist church, kicked, whipped, knocked down, and abused a female slave so cruelly and constantly, that she at length committed suicide by drowning herself in the cistern.

I was at a friend's house one Sabbath morning, when one of his female slaves returned from church very much displeased with the minister. I told her that I supposed he had been reproving her for her badness, which had offended her. She answered no, that would not have offended her, because that was his duty; but as she was on her way home, he had passed her, in the company of some bad overseers, whom he was teaching the best mode of flogging slaves, and she was certain that she should never go to church any more. The Rev. Mr. E., whom I have mentioned before, was very capable of teaching an inexperienced overseer the best method of crushing the manhood out of a slave. He was a cruel driver among his own slaves, who had no faith in white folks' religion, because they saw that its fruits were bad.

Mr. J., a very respectable mechanic, and a man of considerable property, told me that he had a large contract on Mr. T.'s plantation, and during the time he was

working on the place, he became enamored with Mr. T.'s good-looking mulatto house servant. Mr. T. was a wicked old man and a cruel driver, but his lady was an excellent mistress, and kind to the slaves. She was also a member of the Methodist church, and the young circuit rider made her house his home when he was in that neighborhood. Mr. J. became jealous of the young minister, and reported his suspicions to Mr. T., who was highly delighted at the opportunity of exposing a Methodist preacher, especially one of whom his wife had so high an opinion. She frequently tried to reform her husband, and to bring him into the church, but he would curse the church, and swear that the only difference between himself and them was, that he was an open swearer, and they were lying hypocrites, a character which he despised above all others. In this way he would shut her mouth, refusing to hear any thing more about her church and its nice young ministers, whose chief business it was to ingratiate themselves into the good opinion of the ladies, that they might marry some wealthy slaveholder's daughter, or, failing in this calculation, some slaveholder's rich widow. Mr. T. and Mr. J. now set the trap to catch the young minister, and succeeded, to the great horror of poor Mrs. T., who saw that it would be useless to mention religion to her wicked slave-driving husband after that.

My own self-interest, and the knowledge of so much immorality and cruelty within the pale of the church, would doubtless have led me to abandon all thoughts of complying with my sick-bed resolve; but providentially for my eternal interests, while looking over some old books which I found on the plantation, my eye fell on the life of Hester Ann Rogers, the wife of one of the early Methodist ministers. After reading a portion of this book, I knelt down and sought strength and grace to direct me aright, and to help me carry out my resolution. When my year expired, on the last day of December, I quit my unrighteous occupation, and then, having renounced my wicked course of life and my soul destroying employment, I was enabled to approach the throne of

grace and mercy, and to pray that God would for Christ's sake pardon my many sins. Shortly afterwards I had reason to believe that my sins were forgiven, and my soul was filled with love to God and man. After a short time I attached myself to the Baptist church. But as I could not sympathize with a pro-slavery church, I at length withdrew from it by letter. Yet there is no doubt in my mind that a few of the members of that church were Christians in earnest, as their attention to the colored Baptist church proved that they had their Master's cause near their hearts, and loved his down crushed little ones. But these were not slave owners.

My former occupation of working on the plantations was extremely disagreeable to me now, because it brought me into constant contact with scenes of cruelty, and the blasphemous and slang-using overseers. I therefore removed to California, with the intention of settling in that State. But I was unable to stand hard labor and exposure, and after having been taken down with dysentery, which proves fatal to so many of the laborers in that country, I returned to Louisiana. Thus I lost a year's labor, besides my little means. My only chance now was to go to work on the plantations, which I did. After I had been in this kind of employment for some time, and finding that my lungs would not permit me to work in the dust of the old gin or mill, I one day met with two wealthy slaveholders, each of whom owned several plantations. Mr. G. told me that when I was tired of working at my trade, he would give me the management of his bayou plantation. Dr. D. asked me why I refused to accept such an excellent offer, when I could not work? Mr. G. answered him that I had professed religion, turned fool, and quit flogging niggers, just when I had obtained a reputation as a good cropper. The Doctor answered that he thought my profession would interfere with my usefulness as an overseer, and very likely I had done right. The Doctor is a northern man with southern principles, and owns eight or ten large cotton plantations. But he was not so bad a master as some, and had

strict rules to check the cruelty of his overseers. A few years before I commenced as overseer, I worked on one of the Doctor's plantations, where the overseer broke through his regulations with regard to the female slaves, one of these rules prohibiting the overseer from having more than one fancy girl. This was a foolish rule, because the man who carries the lash can make all such rules of no effect. The overseer's house-keeper was a handsome mulatto woman, of about thirty years of age. She had one beautiful daughter twelve or thirteen years old. This was too great a temptation to be resisted by the licentious slavedriver; so he changed the mother for the daughter, which is no uncommon occurrence in slavery.

Brother I., of my church, remarked to me that I was an experienced overseer, used to the management of cotton plantations, and now God had fully prepared me to do good as an overseer, and to show those who were opposed to religion among their slaves, that a plantation might be well and profitably managed where the slaves enjoyed religious privileges, and where the Sabbath was properly respected. I answered that if I owned slaves myself, I could then manage them as I pleased, and might deal with them mercifully and kindly. But if he knew the driving which was required to make a ten-bale crop of cotton per slave, he would be convinced that there was neither justice, love, nor mercy belonging to slavery in the plantations. Some time after this, a gentleman for whom I had formerly done business, wished to visit Europe, and desired me to manage his business during his absence. This I agreed to do. I now concluded to follow Bro. I.'s advice, and try what his God-prepared slavedriver could do. To this end I made arrangements with a colored Baptist minister to preach once a month on the plantation. He belonged to a master who permitted his slaves to work on the Sabbath to make money for themselves, whenever they had the opportunity of doing so. He was therefore satisfied, when I agreed to pay his slave two dollars and a half for each Sabbath that he preached for me. Having lived near

two years and a half on this plantation before, and the slaves having been dissatisfied with the overseer that succeeded me, while the master was displeased with both overseer and slaves on account of short crops, the slaves were glad to see me come back. They knew my mode of management; consequently I had less difficulty in getting a crowding business done, than I should have had on any other plantation. But it is impossible to mix slavedriving and the merciful conditions of Christianity together. I made another large crop on this place, and when my employer returned from Europe, Mr. A. told him that he had better continue to travel, and let me manage his plantation. My employer answered that I was a good cropper, and took good care of the property, but I had ruined his slaves by bringing religion among them; that it would take considerable flogging to whip it off his place again; that he would not own an infernal praying psalm-singing nigger if he could get him for nothing; that is, if he could not have the privilege to whip it out of him. This gentleman told me that he was educated purposely for an Episcopalian minister. If more ministers were sent by the Head of the church, in place of being purposely educated by their parents' desire to send them after the fleece, we should doubtless have fewer pro slavery Reverend Doctors.

CHAPTER XV.

A Martyr Spirit.

DURING the time that I was living on this plantation, a circumstance came to my knowledge such as under ordinary circumstances it would be impossible for an outsider to know any thing about. It was said by one of old, "Give me a fulcrum to rest my lever upon, and I can move the world." I say, "Give me the whip, and the one-man power, and I can defy any outsider to know what is going on within my gag-guarded slavery; and if some Paul Pry should question my slaves, they would tell him, "Massa, dat is white folk's business."

Mr. S, who lived some six miles from the plantation which I managed, was a member is good standing of the Methodist church. He was a married man, and had a beautiful young wife. He also owned a handsome and intelligent mulatto female slave, whose husband belonged to other owners. This slave was a Christian without a doubt, gifted and powerful in prayer, and a beautiful singer. But her master was human, and no more, therefore his church should not have trusted him with unlimited power over defenseless females, for fear that he might be led away by divers lusts. That church should have given the female and her parents power over her own virtue, and then the pastor might have presented his flock to his Master in a much less demoralized condition than I fear will now be the case. The beauty and intelligence of this Christian slave was too much for her slave-driving master's strength. He made improper offers to her, and she resisted them. He threatened her, and she told him that she feared God more than man. He flogged her, and she complained to her mistress. She was then sold to Mr. U., a near neighbor of mine, for one thousand dollars cash. This separated her from her husband, as her new master forbid him to put his foot on the plantation. Mr. U.'s slaves told me that their master took liberties with all his female slaves, not excepting mothers, daughters or sisters; and I had good reason to believe them, for I was as well acquainted with his place as he was himself. The old man knew but little about sickness, and frequently requested me to assist him when any of his slaves were seriously ill. I thus became well acquainted with his doings. This Christian slave woman had now jumped from the frying pan into the fire. Her new master did his utmost to seduce her, by treating her a little better than the other slaves; but finding that this plan failed, he began to threaten her, and bade her remember that he had bought every pound of flesh in her body, and could use it as he pleased; he had bought every drop of blood that circulated in her veins, and had paid down the hard cash for it, consequently he had a right to let it out of her with that whip.

The poor slave was seemingly weak and defenseless before her master, and his bloody lash; but her eyes had been opened, and she knew that those who were for her were more than those who were against her. Yes, he that appeared as the Fourth, when the three Hebrew children were untouched by the flame, was with her then; he that shut the mouth of the lions could restrain that lash; he who opened the heavens to strengthen the first Christian martyr had revealed his presence to that Christian slave, and she answered calmly, "Yes, master, you have bought my body, and my life's labor belongs to you; but," said she, looking up, "my heavenly Master has purchased my soul with his own precious blood, and it belongs to him; my virtue is my own, and I am commanded to keep my body a pure temple for the living God to dwell in, and I feel his presence with me now." Her master gave her up, and tempted her virtue no more, and what is astonishing, did not flog her for resisting him. But he used to curse the Christian slaves to me, and say that they would as soon die as not.

Her husband, who was a favorite slave of his master's, after much importunity got his owner willing to purchase his wife, if Mr. U. would sell her for the same money that he paid for her. He then sent a note to Mr. U. by his slave, saying that it would accommodate him very much, if he would sell him his favorite slave's wife. The husband, greatly delighted at the prospect of soon getting her back again, carried his master's letter to Mr. U., who told him that he never sold slaves, and that it might be good for his health to leave his place as quick as possible. Some of the slaves had told him to call upon me, on his way home, because the owner might listen to me, if he could get me to take up his cause. The poor heart-sick husband accordingly came to me, and it would, I think, have influenced even a proslavery divine, to have seen and heard that poor slave beg and plead with me, as his only hope of persuading his wife's master to sell her. I told him it was true that Mr. U. never sold slave, horse or dog; when he had once got them, he kept them till death

took them from him; then he knew, as well as I did, that it was a ticklish business to interfere with a master about his slaves. But I promised to use any influence or opportunity which I might have, in his and his wife's favor. When this Christian slave woman supposed that all prospect of ever returning to her husband, or even seeing him again, although they were only six miles apart, was finally lost, she took it so deeply to heart, that her health began gradually to fail. Her master named it to me, and cursed all Christian slaves bitterly, saying that if she had been a dancing nigger, she would have taken up with one of his nigger men, and would have forgotten her husband long ago; he would see all the Christian slaves in hell, where they belonged, before he would ever purchase another. After some time, he asked me to examine his Christian nigger, but in language too gross for me to repeat. I did so, and was satisfied that it was fretting about her husband that affected her health. I told her master that he had better keep her out of the dew mornings, give her tonics, and cheer and raise her spirits as much as possible, otherwise he would be very likely to lose his thousand dollars. He then told me that her husband's master had offered him his money back for her, but he did not like to sell a nigger when he could avoid doing so, for there were always dissatisfied slaves that wanted to be sold in hopes of bettering their condition, and who, if they had any prospect of succeeding, would run away and torment their owner till he was glad to get rid of them. I advised the old man in this case to make hay while the sun shone, and save his pocket; for very likely her husband's master might back out from his previous offer, unless he accepted it at once. Shortly after I learned that her purchase had been effected, and she sent me her thanks for having frightened her old master's pocket feeling, which was the only tender spot about him.

That beautiful and sweet-voiced singer's harp now hangs upon the willows. But this will be only for a time, and then it will be again restored, to sound forever in heavenly mansions.

I once heard this Christian slave deliv-

er an exhortation at the graveyard, after the death of one of her fellow slaves, which would have shamed many a reverend pro-slavery doctor. There she stood, a poor, crushed, defenseless slave, but strong in her heavenly Master's strength, while she poured out a stream of simple eloquence as with a tongue of fire. She sometimes pointed her hand towards heaven, and directed her fellow slaves to look there; then pointed to the new made grave, and told them to look there. She told them that her Jesus had conquered death, hell and the grave, not for himself, but for *them*, poor slaves as they were, if they would break off their sins, and accept, for their Master, him who is the resurrection and the life. "Yes," she exclaimed, "that dead slave shall hear his voice; he shall come forth from that grave, and go up yonder to judgment, and my Jesus will be the Judge. Then come, my friends, come men, come women, come children, come all, and be reconciled to that Judge while you are living, and then you shall conquer death and hell, and rise from your graves to a glorious immortality. Rise slaves? No, you shall be kings and priests to God and the Lamb forever. But remember, my friends, when old master tells you that if you finish gathering his cotton by Christmas, he will give you a full week to yourselves, then if you don't finish it by Christmas, you must work all that week, and he will give you no time; so it is with this heavenly Master, you must do his will, if you expect to receive his rewards. And then, my friends, if you only try to do his will, you shall be taught of him, and made to know his will, and his Spirit will be the witness within you that you are his, and are doing his will. There is no darkness, no night in him; and if a cloud hides him for a moment from his own, it will only show him the brighter, when it has passed and gone over."

And is it possible that this poor down-crushed slave's dear Jesus is now the head of the pro-slavery church, and leading on that church to crush and prostitute his own little ones? No, it is not possible; he was afflicted in all that poor slave's afflictions, and he never afflicted himself by leading on those oppressors

he never riveted her chains, nor fastened her feet in the stocks.

While I was living on this place, Mr. T., a near neighbor of mine, (two or three miles distant is called near, in that settlement of large cotton plantations,) told me that he was going to introduce me to a brother Baptist. Mr. S., he remarked, was a tolerably good Christian, but he was particular hell among niggers. Mr. M., a Baptist brother who had but recently joined the church, gave one of his slaves a most cruel flogging with a carpenter's hand saw, which he handled with both hands. About the same time an overseer run one of Judge L's recaptured fugitive slaves to death, and the second one came very near dying, while bringing them home from the parish jail. These cruelties still go on while I am writing, and while the reader is perusing these sketches.

I called on a plantation which was managed by a Baptist slavedriver, and from his well known driving qualities I have no doubt that an old slave, his cook, had good reasons for forming the following opinions of my religion. On commencing conversation with her, she asked me what 'ligion I 'longed to? I answered, "The Baptist." "Oh, lor, massa," exclaimed the old slave, "if you 'longs to dem Baptis, I 'fraid you is not got much 'ligion. I don't 'tend to 'sult you, massa, but I is plain ole nigger, when I talk 'bout 'ligion, dat I is. When 'ligion is got no bressed Jesus in it, den it is cold an' dead; but if Jesus is in it, den it love white folks, an' it love black folks. Den it is not cruel, massa; true 'ligion not cruel, like dis Baptis 'ligion." The slaves raised on the plantations generally speak broken English, having learned from the old Africans.

In conversation with another old slave, he gave me the following reasons for not understanding much about religion: "One preacher come to preach on ole massa plantation, an' I go hear him berry glad. At fust he talk berry good, an' say how much God love us po' slave. Cause you see, massa, da white folks done say dat how God has made nigger for slave; dat make us sorry, an' we 'spose dat how God not love slave. Last, he say

dat how God is berry glad if slave serve ole massa berry good; not like eye slave, to watch ole massa, but to serve ole massa like if we serve da Lor' hisseff; den he is glad as if we serve hisseff. Dat 'stonish dis nigger, I tell you, massa, dat it did, 'cause I 'spose dat if God know all tings, den he know how mean an' cruel ole massa is to us po' slave. Den I get up an' left dat preacher quick, dat is trufe, massa; dat is reason I not know much 'bout dat 'ligion you talk 'bout, 'cause dat is white folks 'ligion."

CHAPTER XVI.

Preacher George finds he cannot Serve Three Masters.

No Christian, who takes a calm view of the outrageous circumstance I am about to relate, can fail to be convinced that slavery is an anti-christian abomination. Watch those slaves as they are marched around the slave-pen for exercise; the men first, then follow the boys, after them the women and girls. They are all well dressed, for the same purpose that a horse-trader trims up his beast for sale. Their faces are greased with tallow, to hide the ashy appearance of age and sickness, and not untrequently, as it is said, their gray hairs are dyed black to deceive the purchaser. The trader has given them all a new age; some must tell the purchaser that they are five years younger than they really are; others will likely stand ten years below their real age. They are also instructed as to what they shall answer the purchaser when he questions them about their former health. Instructions are given to the females which I will not disgust my readers by repeating. A gentleman arrives at the slave-pen, and the slaves are ordered to form into line and dress. They know their places, and form in the order described above, when marching around the circle. Do you see that noble-looking old slave, with a mild, dignified countenance? That is preacher George, who is fifty years of age, but has been instructed to call himself forty-three. The purchaser now walks slowly

down the line, and closely inspects the older class of slaves; at length he stops opposite the preacher, and asks the price of that old nigger. The trader answers that he is a sound, healthy slave, who has never been abused, and is under forty-three years of age, and his lowest selling price is nine hundred. "A full price for an old nigger," answers the purchaser; "let me take him aside and examine him more closely." "Fall out of line and take the gentleman to the inspection room," says the trader. The old preacher leads the way to the room, where he strips for examination. Reader, did you ever see a man examine a horse before he makes the purchase? If you did, then you can judge of the close inspection of a slave whose value is that of several horses. All passes very well until the purchaser asks the preacher to give him his true age, and bids him remember that if he should tell a lie, and deceive him concerning his age, he will take it out of his old hide. The old preacher has been preaching the same master-serving doctrine to his fellow slaves, for a quarter of a century, that his brethren, who ordained him to preach the Gospel, taught him. But he is now caught in their unscriptural snare, and feels astonished and confounded, in view of his situation. He stands in the presence of his heavenly Master, and dare not tell a willful lie. He stands in fear of his slave-trading master, and dare not tell the truth; and he stands in the presence of him who he expects will be his future master, and who threatens his old hide should he deceive him. "Come, you old rascal," says the purchaser, "out with it, sir, and don't hatch any of your infernal lies." "No, massa, I cannot lie," answers the preacher, "because I fear God more than man, and to tell you the truth, I am about fifty years of age, or over." The purchaser now returns, and offers the trader considerably less money for the preacher, and tells him the nigger is over fifty. The trader contradicts him, and swears that the old nigger does not want to be sold to him, and has therefore told him a lie about his age. They cannot agree about the price, and the purchaser crosses over to the next slave-pen. Night has come, and the banjo, the fiddle, and the

dance have ceased. The best-looking female slaves have made their bed on the floor, in the trader's sleeping room. The old preacher is now told to shell off his clothes, and stretch himself on the floor. Two or three stout slaves are ordered to take hold of him, and the trader swears that he can whip more master-serving doctrine into him in half an hour, than all the preachers in his church have been able to preach into him for the last half century.

It would be useless to follow this old preacher through all his trials on the cotton plantation to which he was sold. He was placed under a driving overseer, who compelled his wife, (much younger than himself,) by fear of the lash, to yield to his lustful desires. Preacher George grumbled too loud about this wrong treatment, when the overseer determined to teach him passive submission to the powers that be. But the old preacher dodged him, and ran away. He was found by a neighbor, a few days afterwards, lying dead in the swamp. It was supposed that some hunter had met with him and ordered him to stand, and that on refusing to do this, the fugitive had been shot dead in his tracks, like a great many others who are met with in the woods.

Shortly before I left the South, I heard Mr. P. tell a crowd of slaveholders and overseers that his employer, Mr. F., had whipped religion off his four large plantations; that one of his preachers, who was a good fiddler before he made a profession of religion, had been furnished with a new fiddle, and told by his master, that whenever his overseer ordered the slaves to dance, he must grease his elbow, rosin the bow, and give them music of a lively kind. Several of the company swore that Mr. F. was perfectly right in doing so, because fiddling and dancing made the largest crops of cotton, and nigger religion led to secret combinations and dangerous insurrections. I remarked that we boasted of having Christianized more Africans than all the missionaries sent to Africa; but how could we Christianize Africans, if we shut the light of Christianity out of their souls? Hea-then and Mohammedan nations expected

their laboring classes to comply with the ceremonies, feasts and fasts of their religions, and why should we act worse than they? If we enslave their bodies, we have no business to shut the light of heaven out of their souls, when it is not necessary for us to do so. One of the gentlemen asked me if I could prove that an infernal black nigger had any soul? I answered that this was an admitted fact, and it would be for him to disprove it. He swore that he could very soon do that, and then went on to show that creation was a continued chain of links, that the negro was the dividing link between the human race and the ourang-outang, and was no more than a brute beast, made to cultivate the ground for the master race. I then reminded him that we had a law in our State which would punish as a felon the man who should commit an unnatural crime with a beast, and asked him how many gentlemen there were in that company that would not, according to his reasoning, be liable to be sent to the State prison for ten years at least. This question raised a laugh among the company, and they made the Red River slaveholder stand a treat for all present. They afterwards began to discuss the subject among themselves, and not only found all present guilty, but found a true bill against every white man in that neighborhood.

I have no evil in my heart against any man in the South; indeed, I feel more at home in that section of country, and have generally found better friends there, than anywhere else. But when the church proclaims slavery to be good, and only good, and when the reverend doctors of the northern church repel the charges of cruelty which have been justly urged against slavery, the abomination that has made the church itself a bed of adultery and fornication, I should be guilty before God, if I did not give my simple evidence against it. There are hundreds of mechanics in the free States, who have been employed on southern cotton and sugar plantations, that can confirm all I have said, and more. I admit also that I could have given some bright-side views of slavery, such as Mrs. Stowe and Northrup's "Twelve Years a Slave" have done; but

that would have been useless, because it would not assist the crushed or crushing, or make them any better or better off; and I am willing to affirm that I have never been acquainted with a slaveholding professor of religion, that bore Christian fruits, who did not mourn over the great evil of slavery. I remember that when "Uncle Tom's Cabin" was first published, a merchant in my neighborhood brought on a box of them for sale. He had sold but a few copies, before he was ordered to box them up, and speedily send them back again to the North. I heard an old slaveholder, who had been raised in that section of country, swear that the dog was dead, and they might as well bury him, whenever a white man was forbidden to read any book or paper published in these United States. "Talk about the picture of one Legree," said he, "why the country is full of the real live critters all around us; there, there, there," said he, as he pointed with his hand to their location; "and there is not a slave-driver, or a slaveholder who drives his own slaves, in Louisiana, but has flogged more or less slaves to death. Why, you call me a free nigger master, but I lost a fine slave myself, who died shortly after I had given him a flogging for running away, and I always shall believe that he died from the effects of that flogging."

CHAPTER XVII.

My Last Experiences in Slaveland.

WHEN leaving the South, I met, on board the steamer, a Mississippi Baptist slaveholder, with whom I had a long conversation on the subject of slavery. He told me that he could not make the conditions of slavery harmonize with the conditions of Christianity; that there were fifteen or sixteen slaveholding members of his church who held the same opinions; that when the church declared that slavery was an evil, to be got rid of some time or other, their consciences were more at ease upon the question, but now that a large portion of the church declared that slavery was a blessing to be perpetuated, their daily experience gave the

lie to such declarations, and constantly kept these things before their minds; that his slave property came by his wife, therefore he had no power over it except such as his wife gave him by her power of attorney. She was a kind mistress to her slaves, however, and there is no doubt but she would have consented to liberate them, if the church had not declared that it was no sin to hold them. He said that himself and wife frequently discussed the subject between themselves, but she loved her children, and could not believe it would be right for her to deprive them of the property which she had inherited from her father. Thus the church had built up a support on which the slaveholding members could rest, and feel that their selfish interests were secure. He then told me of some of the cruelties which professing Christians were constantly committing upon their slaves, especially one of the deacons of the Baptist church, who was a good neighbor, and seemingly a good man in other respects. But he loved the dollars, consequently he crowded his slaves, and provided for them badly, and unfortunately was very passionate in managing them. This caused the slaves to run away from him quite frequently; and it was almost impossible to recapture an intelligent fugitive in his neighborhood, without putting the dogs on their trail. The deacon would consequently call upon himself and other neighbors to assist in the chase. He never did like to hunt the slaves with dogs, yet he could not well refuse the old deacon, when he asked his assistance. But in the last chase which he took, the fugitive failed to climb or get out of the way of the dogs, and when the hunters rode up, they found their victim torn in a most shameful manner. After they had beaten the dogs off, this gentleman declared to all his neighbors present, that he had taken his last dog chase after a fellow-creature, and every slave he had might go, if he could not recapture them without using such means.

"The wicked world a deadly chase on deacons
once began,

But now the church is changed, and deacons chase
their brother man."

I have seen fugitives shamefully torn

by the dogs when they failed to climb out of their reach. I had a neighbor, Mr. O., who kept a pack of dogs trained for the purpose, one of which broke out of his yard, and cut the throat of his valuable slave in a few minutes.

It may be interesting to the reader to know the mode of training these hounds, which, when properly educated, will notice neither fox nor deer trail, but only the trail of a negro. The trainer selects a litter of pups from a good-nosed, intelligent breed of fox hounds. He then prepares a proper yard, having a shelter in it, where he keeps them close, and permits no slave to visit or feed them. When they have attained sufficient age and knowledge to notice those about them, and to revenge themselves on any tormentor, some of the largest negro children are daily called to tease them, by pulling their ears and pinching them, till at length they begin to hate their tormentors and pant for revenge. The trainer then supplies each hound with a neck collar, or strap, to which he secures a rope, so that he may prevent the young hounds from biting the children. When they are of sufficient age to begin to trail, or follow their game by the nose, the boys, who have been tormenting them until they hate the sight of a negro, run a short distance, and then climb a gate or fence, so as to be out of reach. The distance is increased as the dogs improve in trailing, until they will follow their victim to any distance through fields, woods or swamps, unless by taking the water the fugitive foils them and they lose his trail. This, however, is somewhat difficult for him to accomplish, unless in an extensive overflowed swamp, such as the one where Northrup made his escape. I am acquainted in that section of country, and am satisfied that his "Twelve Years a Slave" gives a correct view of things in those lower regions, where the whole people seem already God-forsaken and dwelling in outer darkness. Should the fugitive, after taking the water, soon leave it again, the hounds would strike his trail afresh, as they hunt both sides of the lakes, bayous and slues, for miles, unless the hunters fear that their dogs, in taking the water, will fall

a prey to the alligators which swarm in those streams. But the fox-hounds are cowardly, and a resolute fugitive might beat them back and make his escape. To overcome this difficulty, the slave hunting gang train a few savage curs, to run with the hounds by sight, and assist them in securing their human prey.

My visit to the North was under the following circumstances: Finding there was an opportunity to liberate several slaves, who were the children of their masters, if some one in whom the owners had confidence would attend to it, I offered them my services gratis, provided they would pay my necessary expenses. It was arranged that I should first take one of these children, a fine boy of about twelve years of age, to Ohio, liberate him, and put him to a proper school in the best location I could find. While traveling around in that State, I was surprised to find a large portion of the people opposed to liberated slaves settling among them. This was the principal cause which led me afterwards to join the free labor cotton movement, which I supposed would be a means of killing slavery, by opening up the way for a large emigration to Africa and other countries, where the colored man might escape the pressure which the white race will always bring to bear against him in this country. At length I arrived at Xenia, Ohio, where the Rev. Mr. French had just opened a colored college. I was much pleased with this gentleman, and especially with the neighborhood around Xenia, where I found much less prejudice against color than I had found in other places. From this place I wrote to an old slaveholding friend of mine in Louisiana, that I was fully convinced God had never made the colored race for abject slaves; that I had here found colored men who were more intelligent and much better educated than either him or myself; and that such facts as this did more to convince me that slavery was wrong, than Hammond, Cartwright, Estes, Fletcher, and all the host of pro-slavery preachers that might be added to the list, could do to convince me of the contrary.

When I returned to the South, expecting to bring up the rest of the children

according to previous arrangement, I found that money was scarce, and the children could not leave until the following spring, before which time I left for England. Several of them have since been brought up to Xenia. One of the parties, Mr. D., had changed his mind before my return, and swore that the black Republicans were increasing too fast in Ohio for him to send his children there; that they should be slaves for life, and their descendants forever, before they should be shoe-blacks for black Republicans; that he had given their mother for wife to a fine nigger he had lately purchased, and she, being young and healthy, would produce him a little nigger every year and a half, or two years. These would pay all the expenses of raising, by the time they were fifteen years of age, and would then bring him one thousand dollars each, cash down, which would be a d—— sight better business than keeping her to raise his own niggers, and then liberating and sending them among the black Republicans at his own expense.

I learned that the Rev. Mr. N., of the Methodist church, had ordered his slaves to recapture or shoot one of his neighbor's fugitive slaves. He gave them his gun, but the fugitive refused to be recaptured, and the preacher's slaves shot him down in his tracks. A wicked old slaveholder in the neighborhood told me that he would never permit his driver to recapture any slaves who belonged to that murdered slave's master; that preacher N. was as much a murderer as if he had stretched hemp for his crime; and that his brother, a member of the same church, was the greatest amalgamator in the neighborhood and seduced all his young female slaves as they became of sufficient age. During a conversation which I had with Mr. S. who was also a member of that church he openly and boldly defended concubinage with the female slaves, that is, if the parties would confine themselves to one. I disputed this outrageous opinion, and when he found that I was too hard for him, he remarked that he was not so well posted up in the Bible as I was, but confidently referred me to Dr. A., who stood high in that Methodist church. I thanked him, and remarked that I preferred to go

to the Gospel, where I found that I was advised not to associate with a brother who was a fornicator.

I had heard that the Rev. Mr. S. had a colored Bible-class in his church; this astonished me, as I was well aware that the slaves could not read. I therefore inquired of one of the colored members of that church, who told me that they committed a few Bible passages to memory; that their preacher received the prostitutes and concubines of the master race into their church, much against the will of the true Christian colored members; and that he had recently divorced his female slave from her husband, who belonged to other owners. The ground of

this divorce was, that the husband had refused to stretch and hold his wife, while her enraged mistress flogged her. The poor man begged her mistress to wait until she was cool, and then if his wife was guilty of any fault worthy of being whipped, he would stretch and hold her. But the enraged preacher's wife ordered him to stretch her at once, or to leave her premises forever; and the reverend gentleman told his female slave that she might take up with another husband.

Stand for the right, through thick or thin;
Let rogues behold their shame and sin.
Why fear the frowns or threats of men,
If truth sustain my humble pen?

JOHN ROLES.



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